

JAMES PATTERSON

MAX RIDE

ULTIMATE FLIGHT

HOUSER • SILVA • WONG • ROSENBERG



001

MARVEL

MAXIMUM RIDE DOESN'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HER PAST.

SHE KNOWS ABOUT THE **LAB** WHERE SHE WAS GIVEN WINGS AND THE ABILITY TO FLY. SHE KNOWS ABOUT **JEB**, THE MAN WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR EXPERIMENTING ON HER. SHE KNOWS THAT SHE HAS TO PROTECT THE REST OF **THE FLOCK** -- FANG, NUDGE, IGGY, GASMAN, AND ANGEL -- AT ALL COSTS.

AND SHE KNOWS THAT SHE HAS ONE MISSION: TO SAVE THE WORLD.

JAMES PATTERSON

MAX RIDE

ULTIMATE FLIGHT

ADAPTED FROM THE NOVEL, *MAXIMUM RIDE: SCHOOL'S OUT FOREVER*, BY JAMES PATTERSON

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HOPE IS A TRICKY THING. IT CAN DRIVE YOU FORWARD. GIVE YOU PURPOSE.

BUT HOPE CAN ALSO MAKE YOU FORGET A LIFETIME OF LESSONS. CONVINCE YOU THAT, UNLIKE EVERY SINGLE OTHER MOMENT OF YOUR LIFE, THINGS MIGHT JUST WORK OUT THIS TIME AROUND.

WE LET HOPE LIE TO US. AND THIS IS WHERE WE ENDED UP. WITH FANG FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE.

IF I LOSE HIM...

30 MINUTES AGO,
OVER WASHINGTON, D.C.

WE'RE FREAKS.
HYBRID **BIRD-KIDS**.
AND WE'VE SPENT
OUR LIVES RUNNING
FROM EVEN BIGGER
MONSTERS.

BUT NOW WE ARE FINALLY FREE
OF THE SCHOOL, THE LABORATORY
AND TORTURE CHAMBER THAT
MADE US INTO WHAT WE **ARE**.

DURING OUR ESCAPE,
WE'D FOUND A FILE
THAT HAD INFORMATION
ON OUR BIRTH PARENTS.

DO YOU
REALLY THINK
THEY'LL BE THERE?
WILL THEY LIKE US?
WHAT IF THEY'RE
SCARED OF US?

Nudge

Icyy

THEY'LL
BE LITTERLY
TERRIFIED TO
LEARN YOU
DON'T HAVE
AN **OFF-SWITCH**.

AND WE WERE
DETERMINED TO
FIND THEM.

DO YOU THINK
THEY'LL REALLY WANT
US? THAT FILE SAID
THEY **SOLD** US...

Angel

Gazzy

IF THEY
DON'T WANT
US, THEN WE
DON'T NEED
THEM.

WELL, THE
REST OF
THE FLOCK'S
PARENTS.
THERE WAS
NO MENTION
OF MINE.

Max

MAYBE THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE
WE MISSED IN THERE ABOUT YOUR
PARENTS. ANOTHER FILE...

THE
IMPORTANT THING IS
ALL OF US GOT OUT.

Fanc

POINT IS, WE
WEREN'T HIDING
ANYMORE. WE
WERE MOVING
TOWARDS
A NEW LIFE.

LIKE THAT
WAS EVER
A REAL
OPTION
FOR ANY
OF US.

GUYS!!!

ERASERS. OUR NEVER-ENDING NIGHTMARE. HUNTERS WITH TEETH AND CLAWS. BRED BY THE SCHOOL AS THEIR SECURITY FORCE.

AND NOW THEY HAVE WINGS?!

THOUGHT YOU WERE DONE WITH ME, HUH, MAX?

SORRY TO DISAPPOINT!

THE LAST TIME I SAW ARI, I SNAPPED HIS NECK. HE DIDN'T LEAVE ME ANY CHOICE.

IT WAS A RELIEF TO FIND OUT I WASN'T A MURDERER. AND NOT JUST BECAUSE THERE'S A CHANCE ARI'S MY BROTHER.

WAP

MIGHT HAVE TURNED OUT BETTER FOR US IF I WERE, THOUGH.

WOW, ERASERS ARE **AWFUL** AT FLYING.

SERIOUSLY! TRY A LIFETIME OF PRACTICE, GUYS.

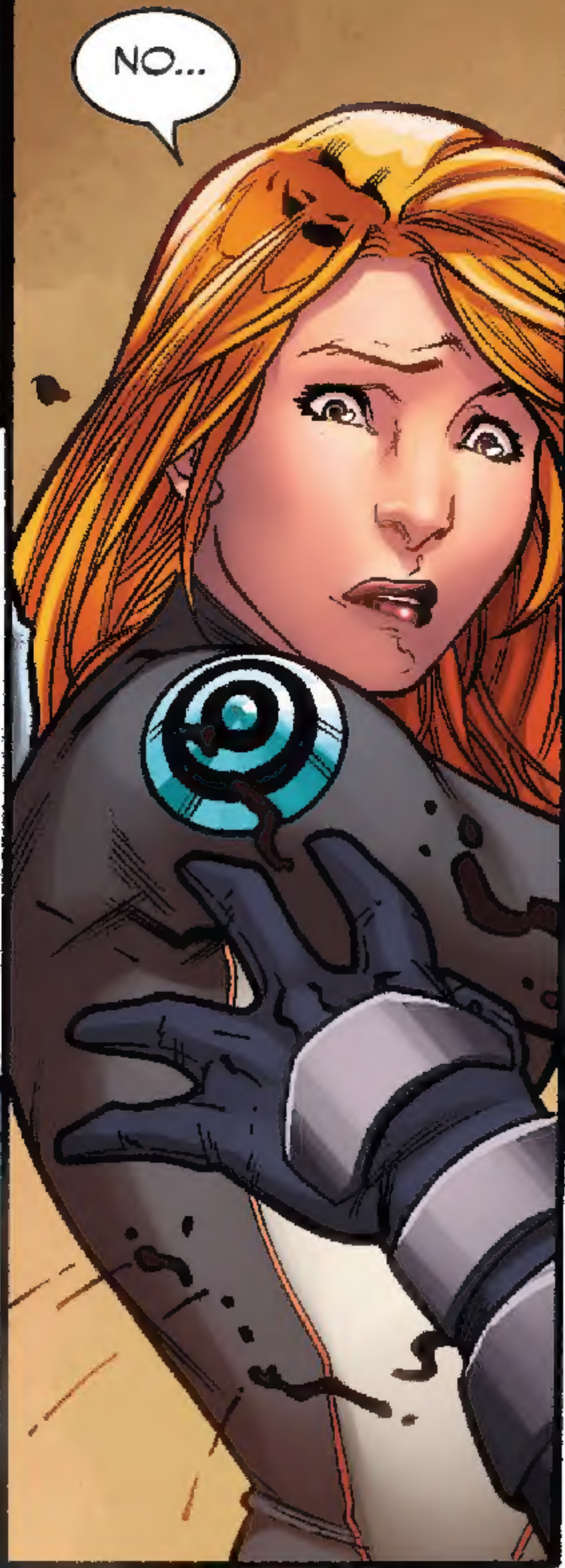
AND MAYBE DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT **SMELL**, TOO.

I THINK THE MAD SCIENTISTS ARE LETTING THEIR STANDARDS SLIP.

SHODDY WORKMANSHIP. WHO PUTS WINGS ON A FRID--

SHNK

GAH!



NO...



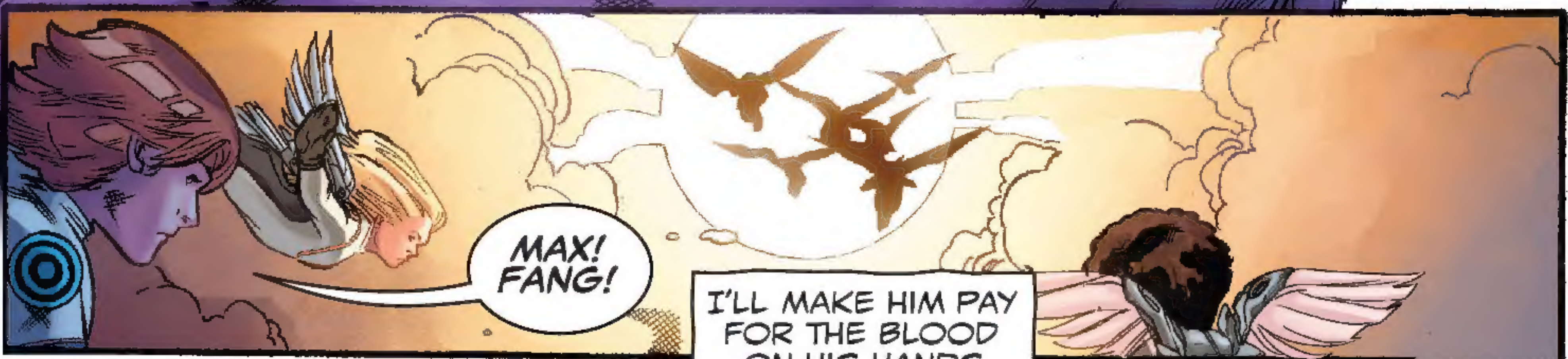
FANG!



NEXT
TIME IT'LL BE
YOUR TURN,
MAX!

ARI. ONCE HE WAS
JUST A SWEET LITTLE KID
FOLLOWING HIS FATHER JEB
AROUND THE SCHOOL.

NOW HE'S A MONSTER. JEB BETRAYED
HIM. BETRAYED ALL OF US. WORKING
FOR THE SCHOOL ALL ALONG.



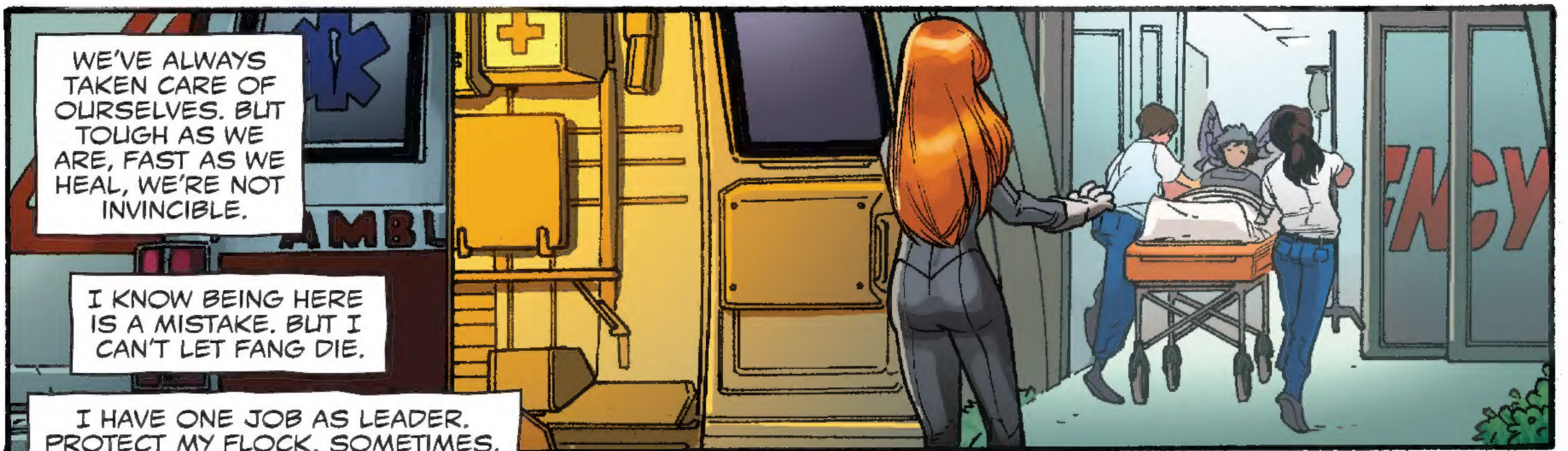
MAX!
FANG!

I'LL MAKE HIM PAY
FOR THE BLOOD
ON HIS HANDS.



IS HE
OKAY?!

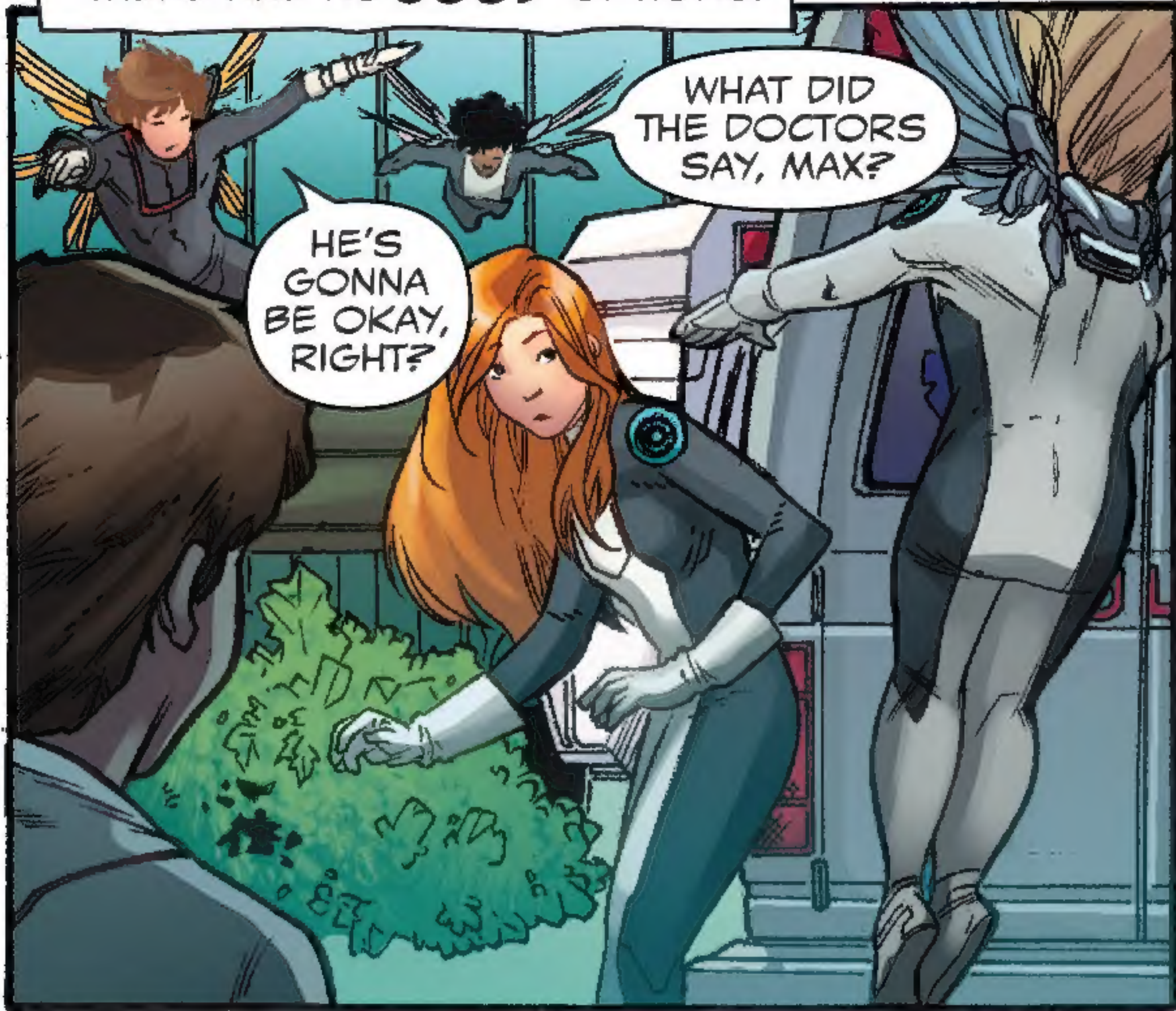
I
DON'T...
WE NEED
HELP!



WE'VE ALWAYS
TAKEN CARE OF
OURSELVES. BUT
TOUGH AS WE
ARE, FAST AS WE
HEAL, WE'RE NOT
INVINCIBLE.

I KNOW BEING HERE
IS A MISTAKE. BUT I
CAN'T LET FANG DIE.

I HAVE ONE JOB AS LEADER.
PROTECT MY FLOCK. SOMETIMES,
THERE ARE NO **GOOD** OPTIONS.



HE'S
GONNA
BE OKAY,
RIGHT?

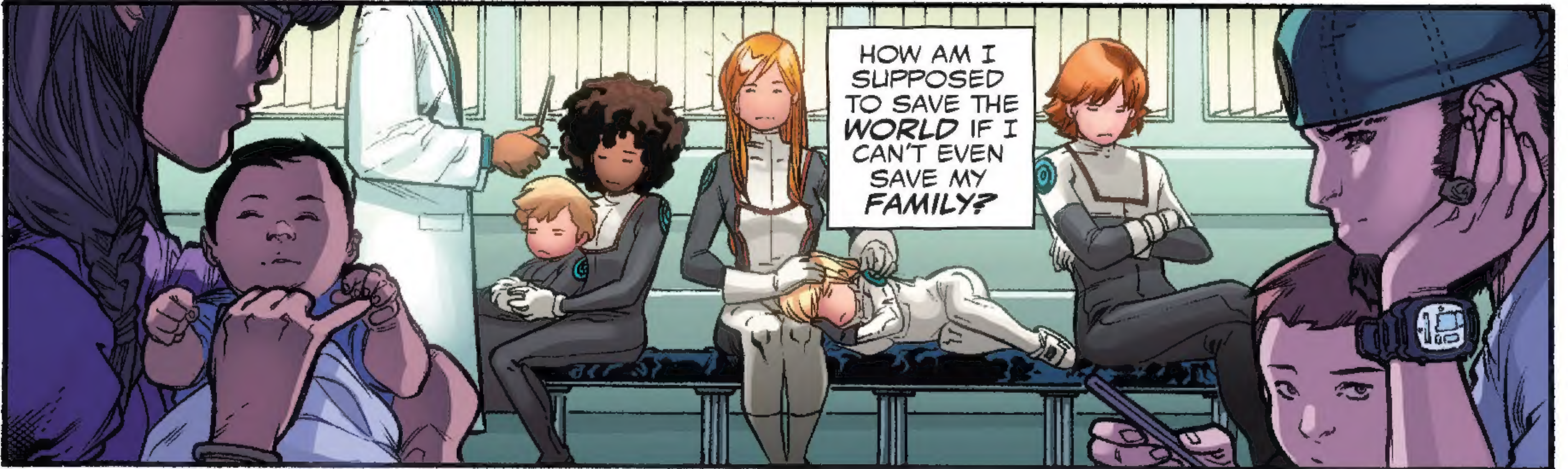
WHAT DID
THE DOCTORS
SAY, MAX?

AT LEAST THE
VOICE IN MY HEAD
IS KEEPING
QUIET. FOR NOW.

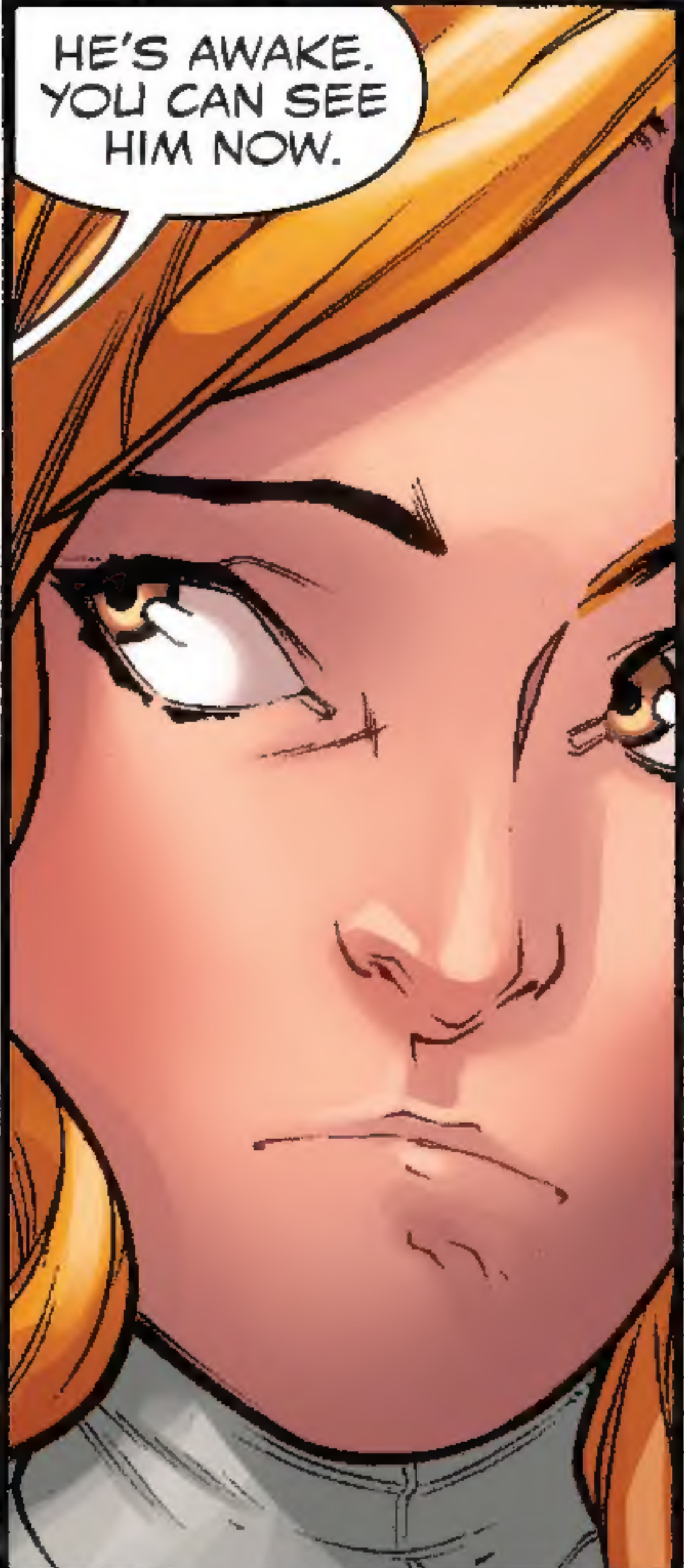
IT SHOWED UP RECENTLY,
SPOUTING ADVICE AND OTHER
NONSENSE. TELLING ME HOW
I'M MEANT TO SAVE THE WORLD.



I'LL
KILL HIM
IF HE
ISN'T.



HOW AM I
SUPPOSED
TO SAVE THE
WORLD IF I
CAN'T EVEN
SAVE MY
FAMILY?

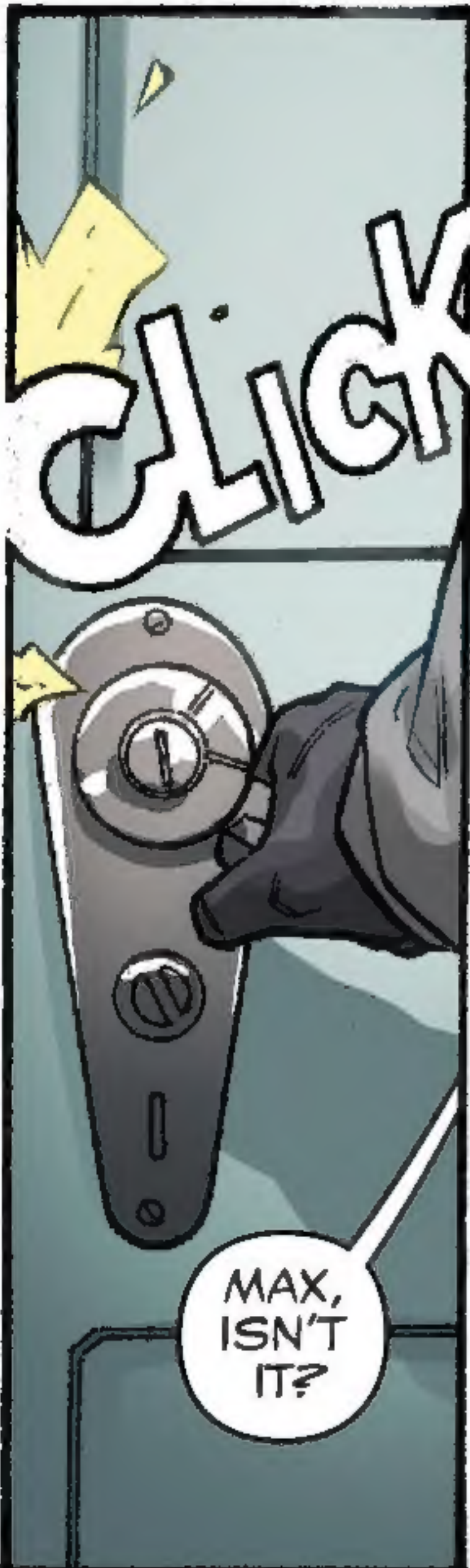


HE'S AWAKE.
YOU CAN SEE
HIM NOW.



MAX...

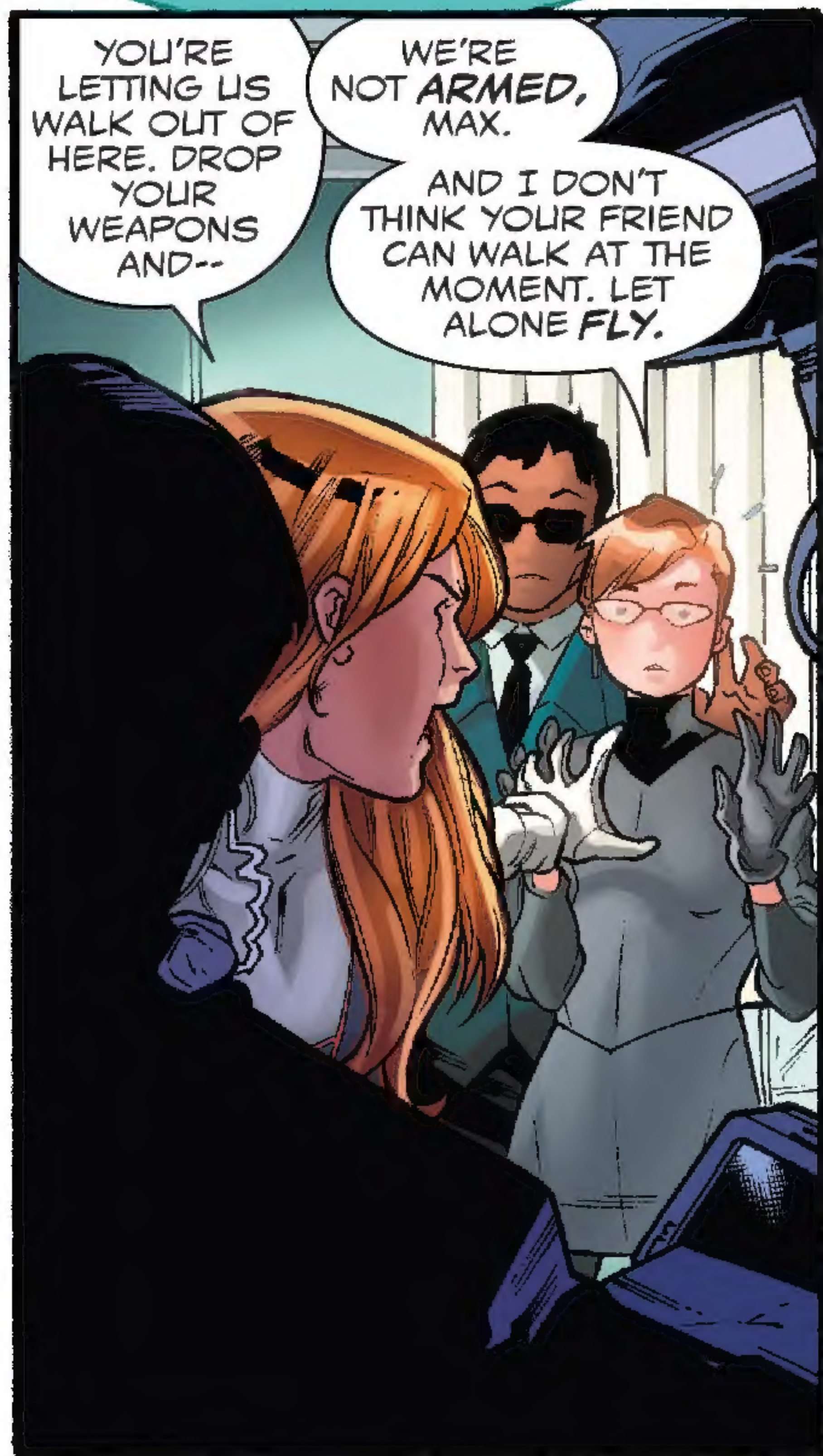
FANG...
HOW ARE
YOU?



MAX,
ISN'T
IT?



THESE PEOPLE
HAVE SEEN
FANG. THEY
KNOW WHAT
WE ARE.



YOU'RE
LETTING US
WALK OUT OF
HERE. DROP
YOUR
WEAPONS
AND--

WE'RE
NOT **ARMED**,
MAX.

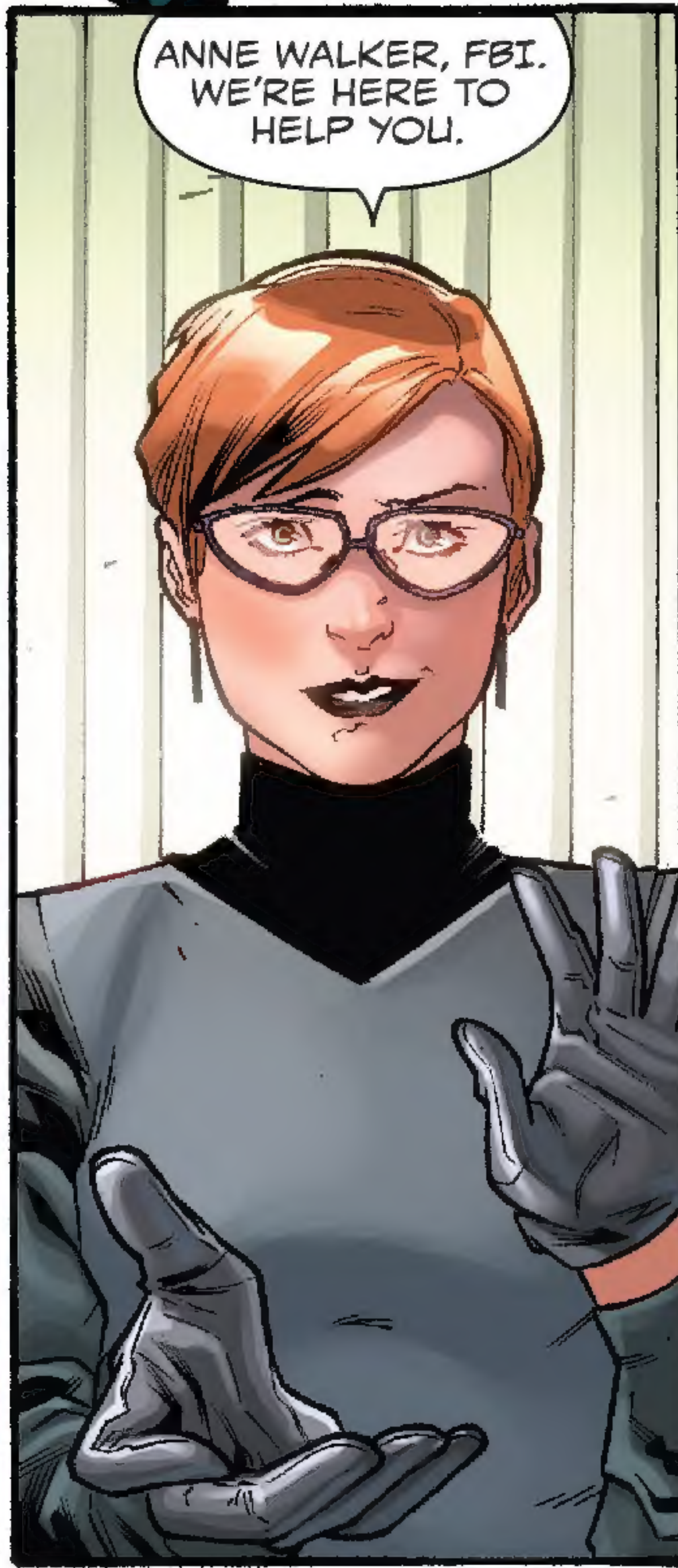
AND I DON'T
THINK YOUR FRIEND
CAN WALK AT THE
MOMENT. LET
ALONE **FLY**.



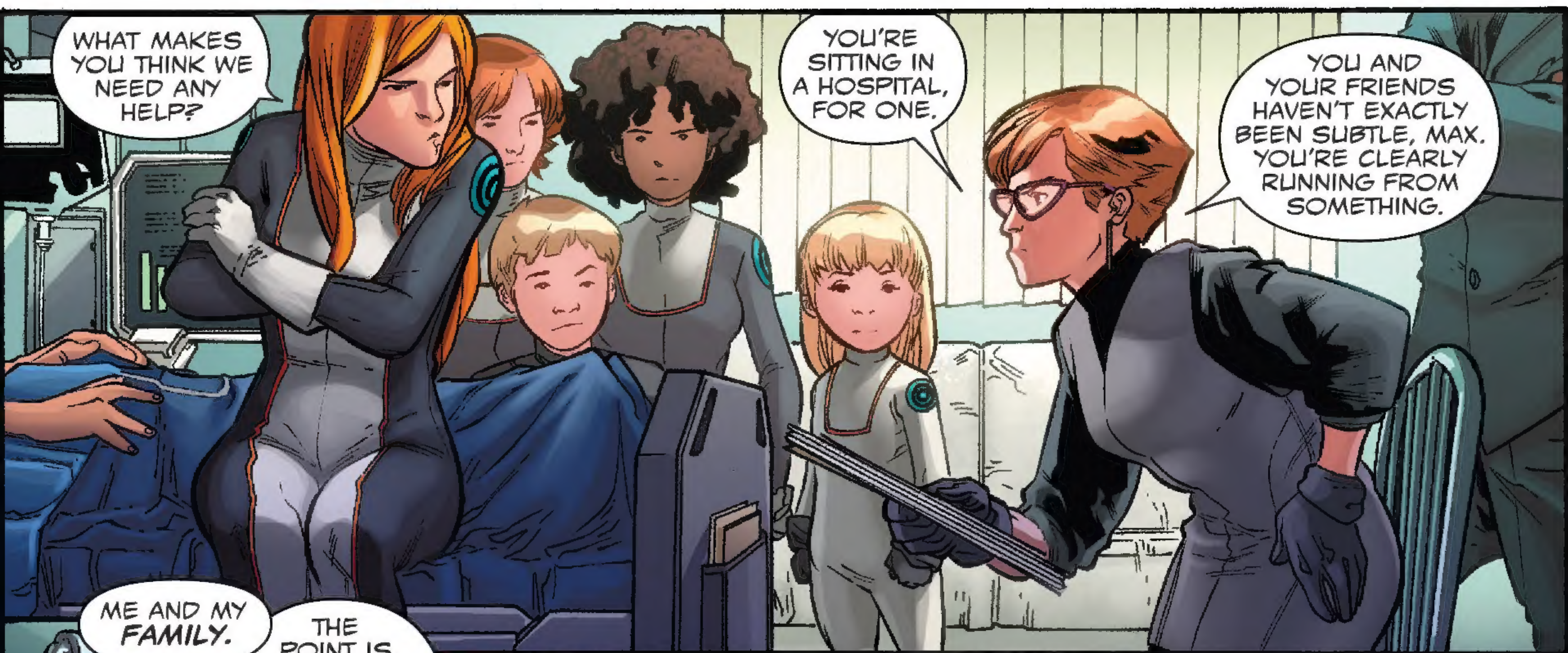
THIS ISN'T RIGHT. NO
ERASERS, NO THREATS.
AND SHE WOULD HAVE
SHOT ME BY NOW IF
SHE HAD A GUN.

AM I RIGHT TO
ASSUME THOSE
WINGS AREN'T
JUST FOR
SHOW?

WHO
ARE
YOU?



ANNE WALKER, FBI.
WE'RE HERE TO
HELP YOU.



WHAT MAKES YOU THINK WE NEED ANY HELP?

YOU'RE SITTING IN A HOSPITAL, FOR ONE.

YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS HAVEN'T EXACTLY BEEN SUBTLE, MAX. YOU'RE CLEARLY RUNNING FROM SOMETHING.

ME AND MY FAMILY.

THE POINT IS, YOUR RECENT ACTIVITIES HAVE CONFIRMED THE RUMORS WE'VE BEEN FOLLOWING FOR YEARS.

A SECRET LAB GROWING VIABLE RECOMBINANT LIFEFORMS WITH THE AIM OF WEAPONIZING THEM.

WE FOUND A NUMBER OF...VICTIMS OF THE EXPERIMENTS. THE ONES YOU SET FREE WHEN YOU MADE YOUR ESCAPE.

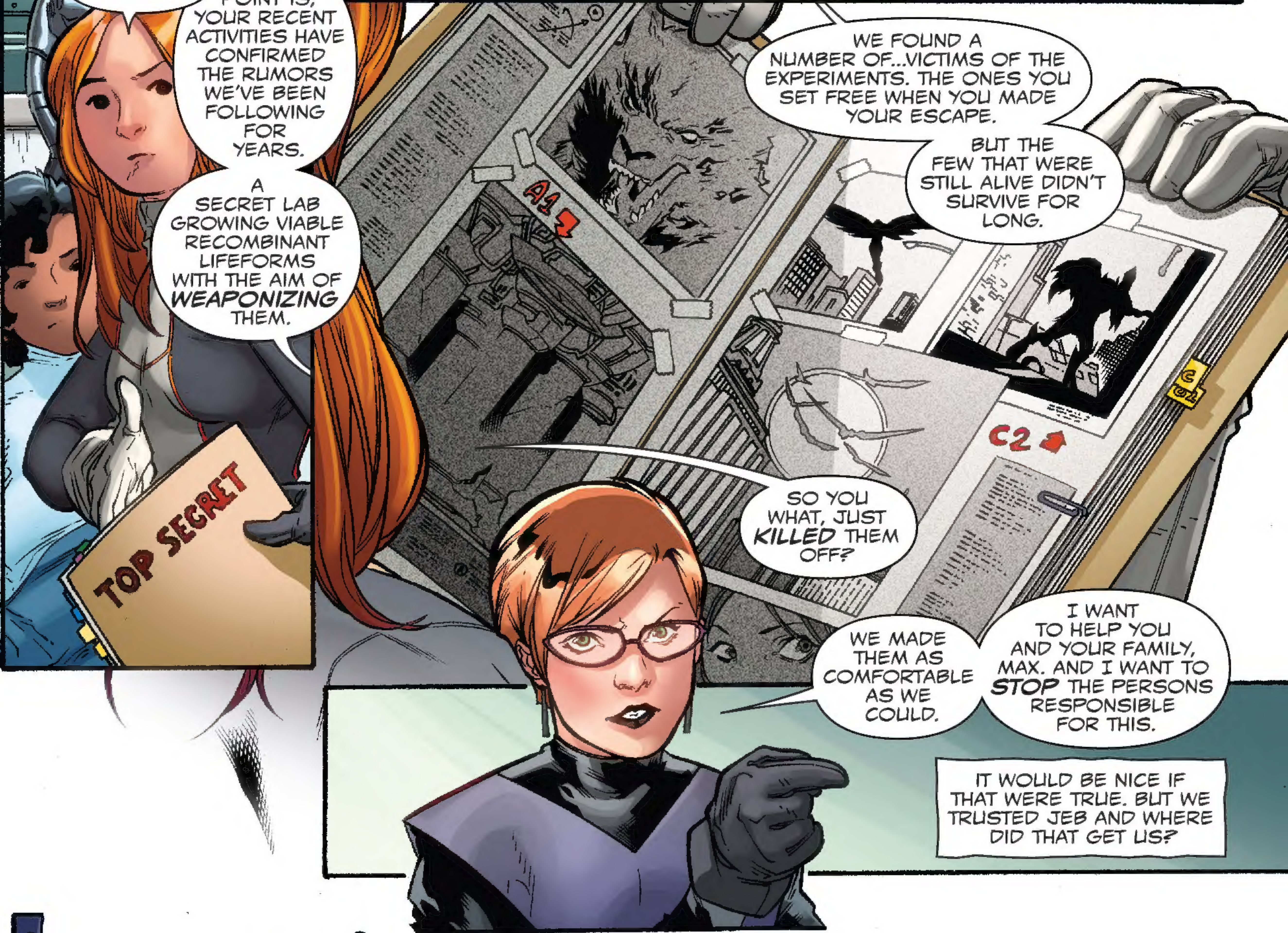
BUT THE FEW THAT WERE STILL ALIVE DIDN'T SURVIVE FOR LONG.

SO YOU WHAT, JUST KILLED THEM OFF?

WE MADE THEM AS COMFORTABLE AS WE COULD.

I WANT TO HELP YOU AND YOUR FAMILY, MAX. AND I WANT TO **STOP** THE PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS.

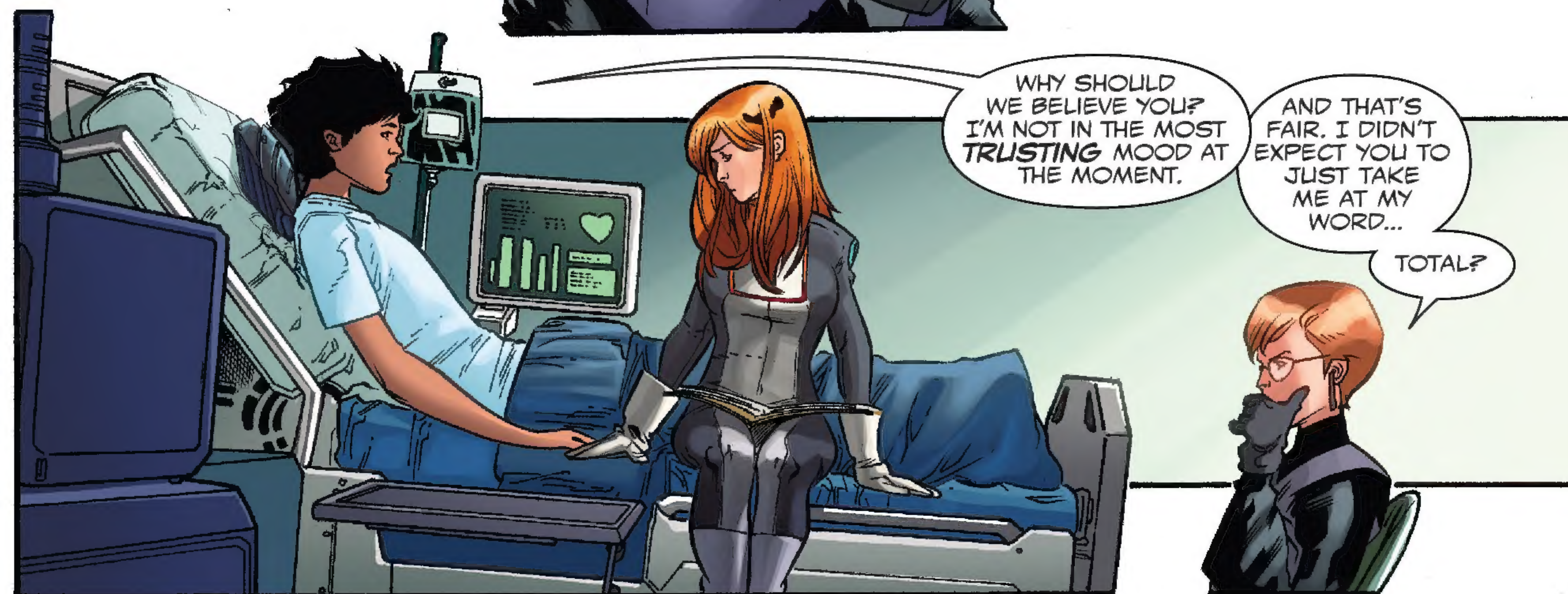
IT WOULD BE NICE IF THAT WERE TRUE. BUT WE TRUSTED JEB AND WHERE DID THAT GET US?



WHY SHOULD WE BELIEVE YOU? I'M NOT IN THE MOST **TRUSTING** MOOD AT THE MOMENT.

AND THAT'S FAIR. I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO JUST TAKE ME AT MY WORD...

TOTAL?

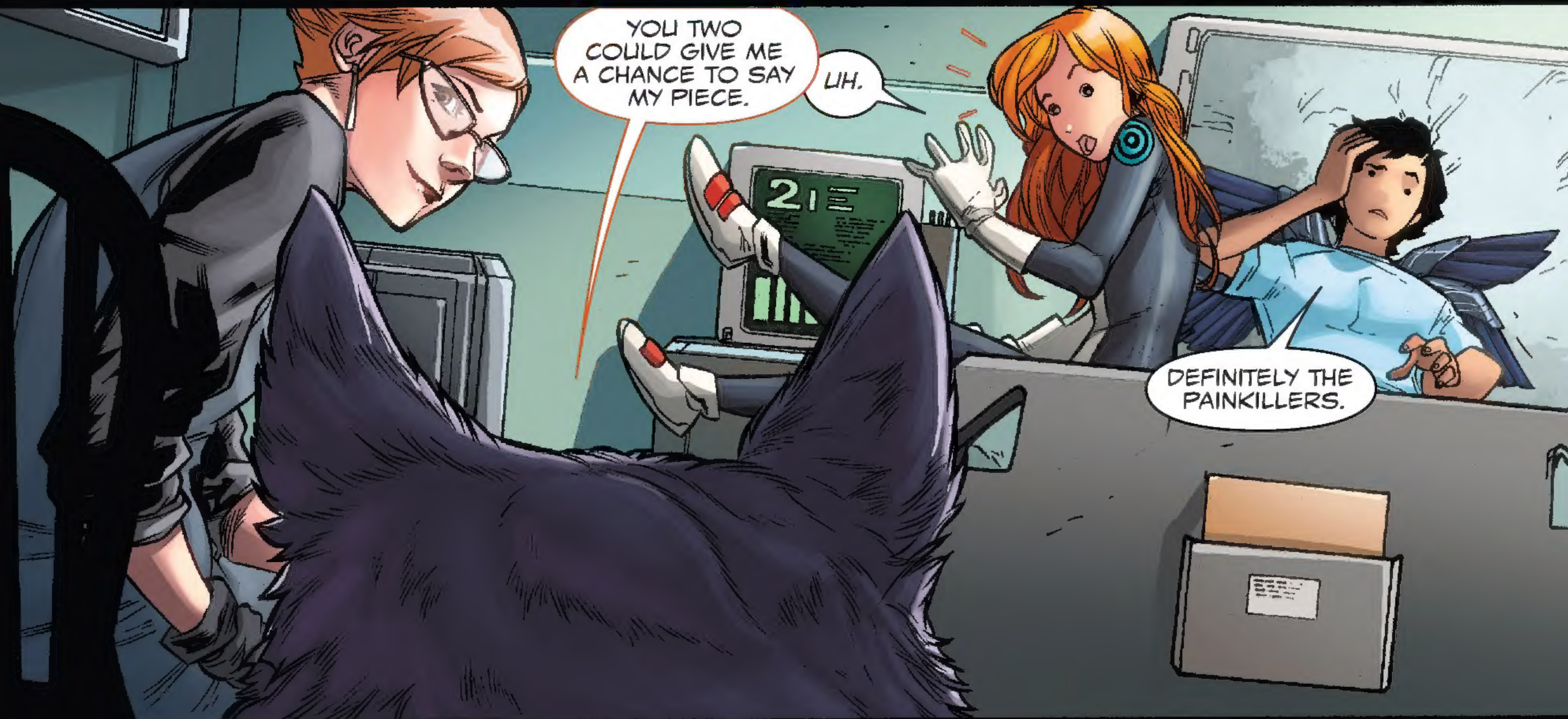




UM, IS IT THE PAINKILLERS OR DID SOMEONE ACTUALLY LET A DOG IN HERE?

IT'S GREAT YOU'RE AN ANIMAL PERSON, BUT DON'T KNOW WHY--

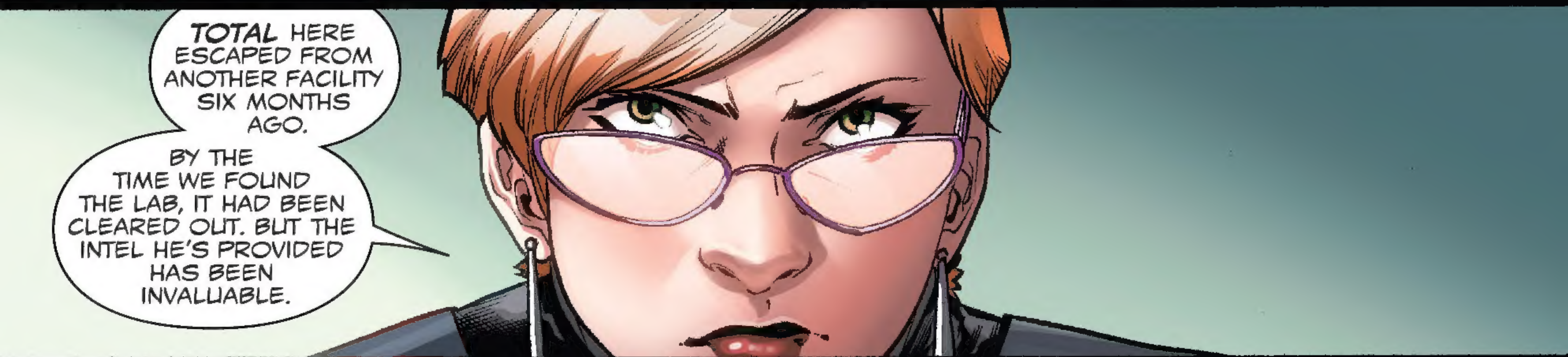
OH, FOR GOODNESS SAKE.



YOU TWO COULD GIVE ME A CHANCE TO SAY MY PIECE.

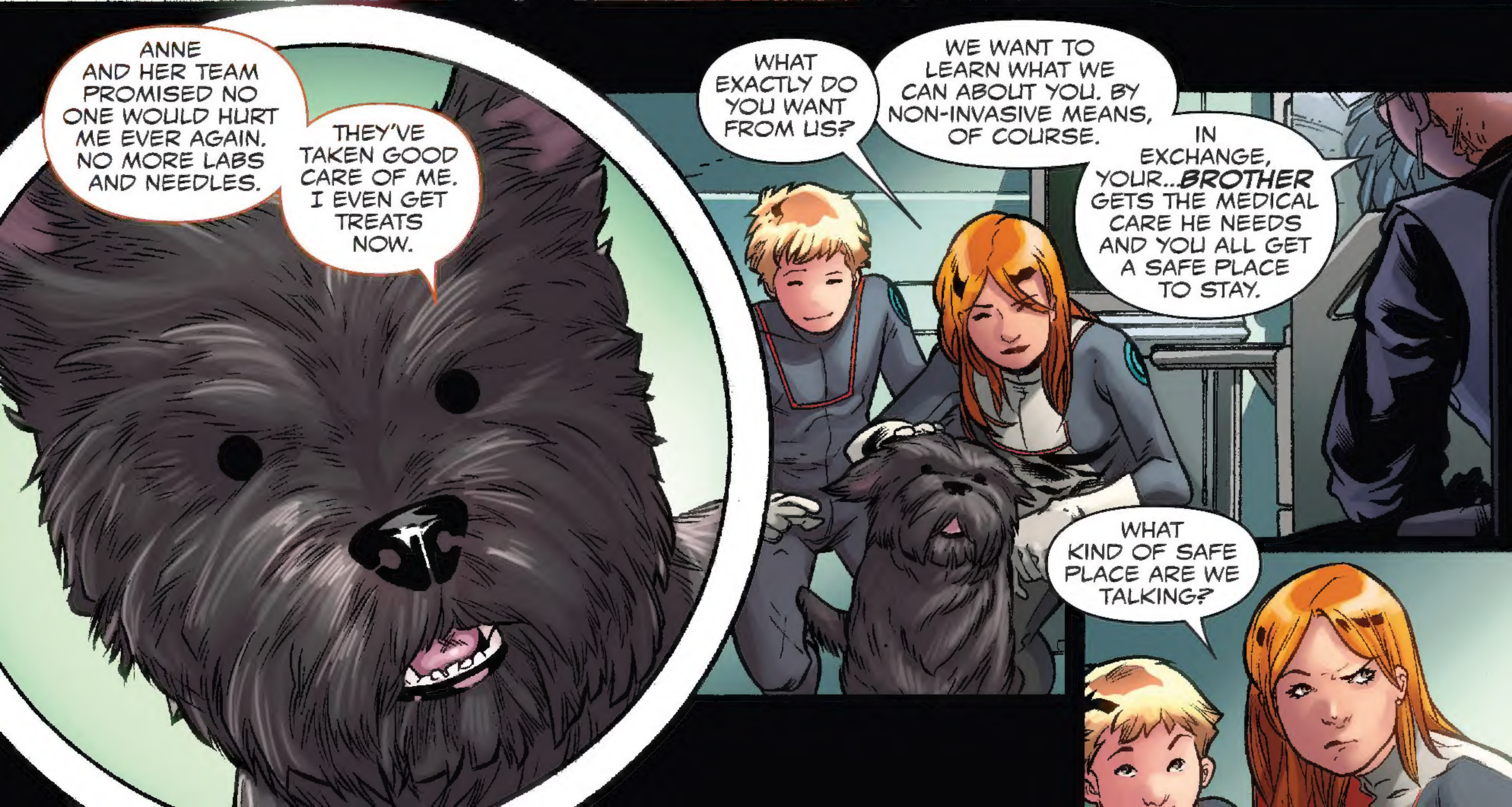
UH.

DEFINITELY THE PAINKILLERS.



TOTAL HERE ESCAPED FROM ANOTHER FACILITY SIX MONTHS AGO.

BY THE TIME WE FOUND THE LAB, IT HAD BEEN CLEARED OUT. BUT THE INTEL HE'S PROVIDED HAS BEEN INVALUABLE.



ANNE AND HER TEAM PROMISED NO ONE WOULD HURT ME EVER AGAIN. NO MORE LABS AND NEEDLES.

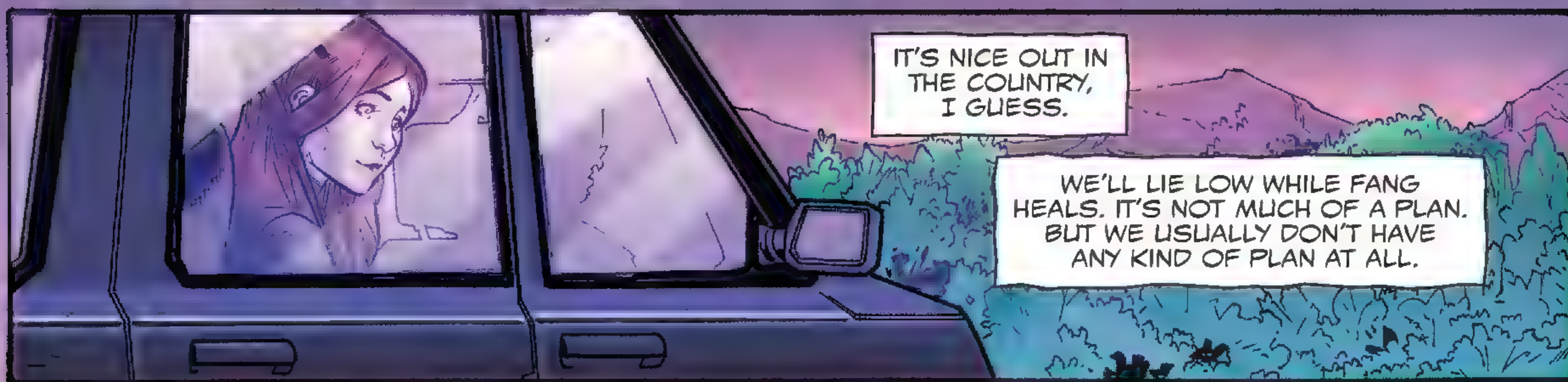
THEY'VE TAKEN GOOD CARE OF ME. I EVEN GET TREATS NOW.

WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU WANT FROM US?

WE WANT TO LEARN WHAT WE CAN ABOUT YOU. BY NON-INVASIVE MEANS, OF COURSE.

IN EXCHANGE, YOUR...**BROTHER** GETS THE MEDICAL CARE HE NEEDS AND YOU ALL GET A SAFE PLACE TO STAY.

WHAT KIND OF SAFE PLACE ARE WE TALKING?

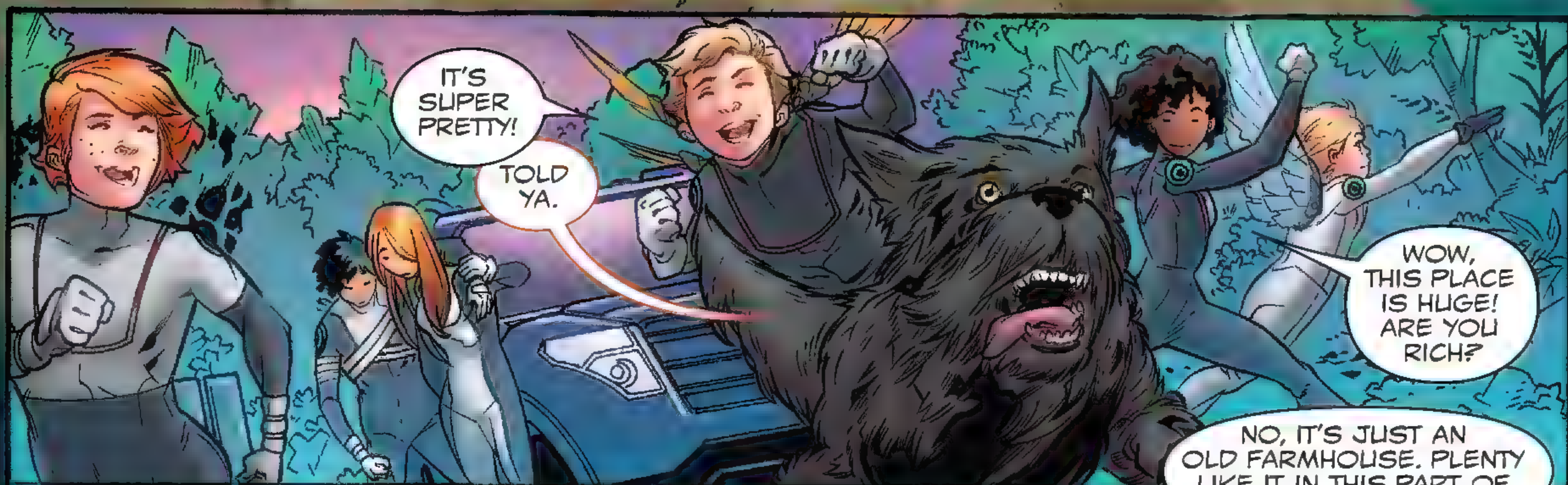
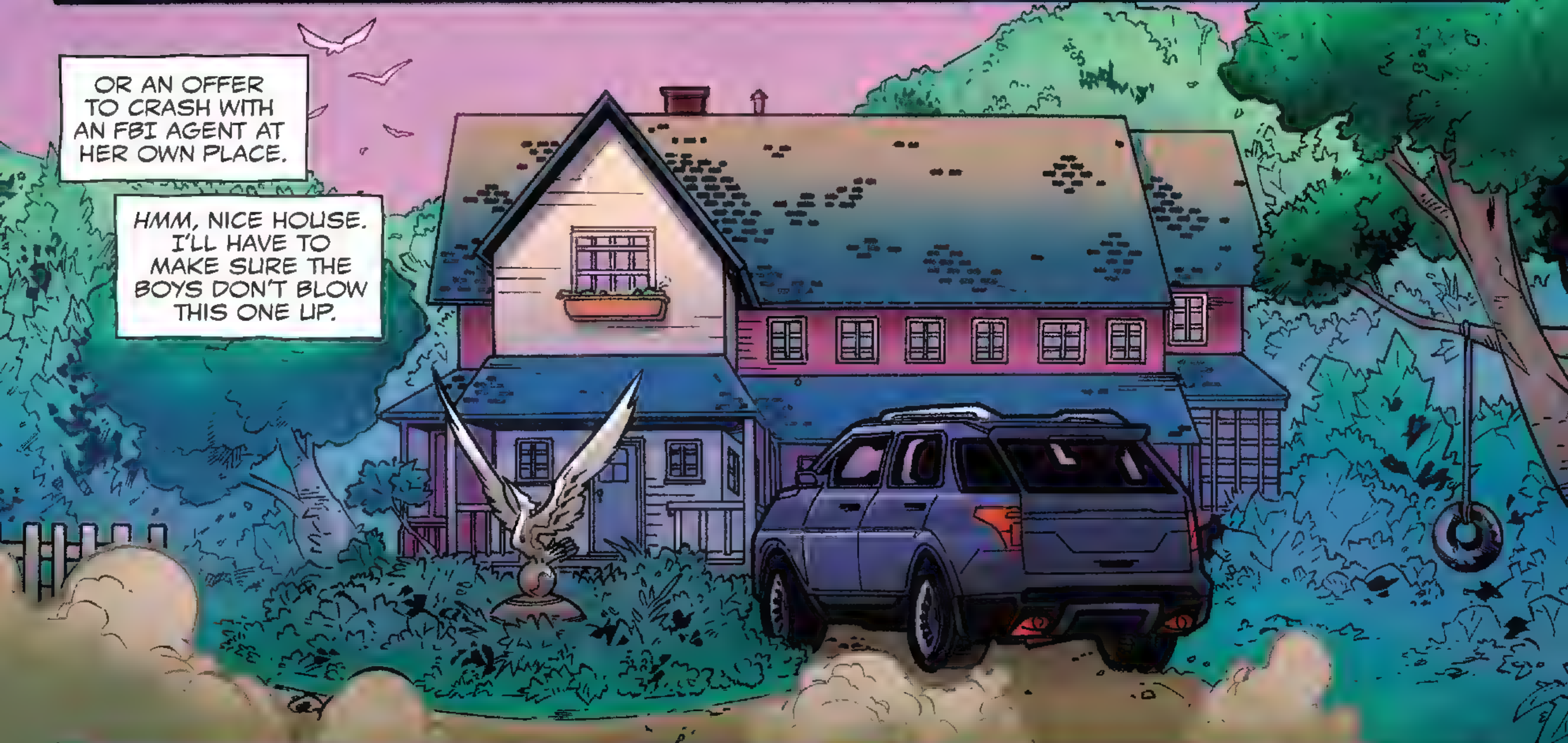


IT'S NICE OUT IN THE COUNTRY, I GUESS.

WE'LL LIE LOW WHILE FANG HEALS. IT'S NOT MUCH OF A PLAN. BUT WE USUALLY DON'T HAVE ANY KIND OF PLAN AT ALL.

OR AN OFFER TO CRASH WITH AN FBI AGENT AT HER OWN PLACE.

HMM, NICE HOUSE. I'LL HAVE TO MAKE SURE THE BOYS DON'T BLOW THIS ONE UP.

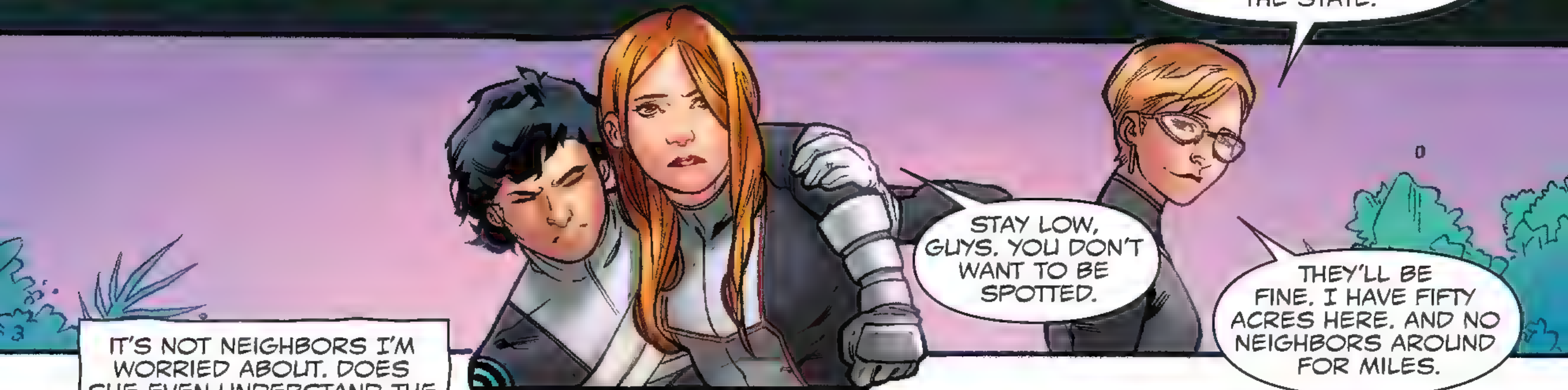


IT'S SUPER PRETTY!

TOLD YA.

WOW, THIS PLACE IS HUGE! ARE YOU RICH?

NO, IT'S JUST AN OLD FARMHOUSE. PLENTY LIKE IT IN THIS PART OF THE STATE.



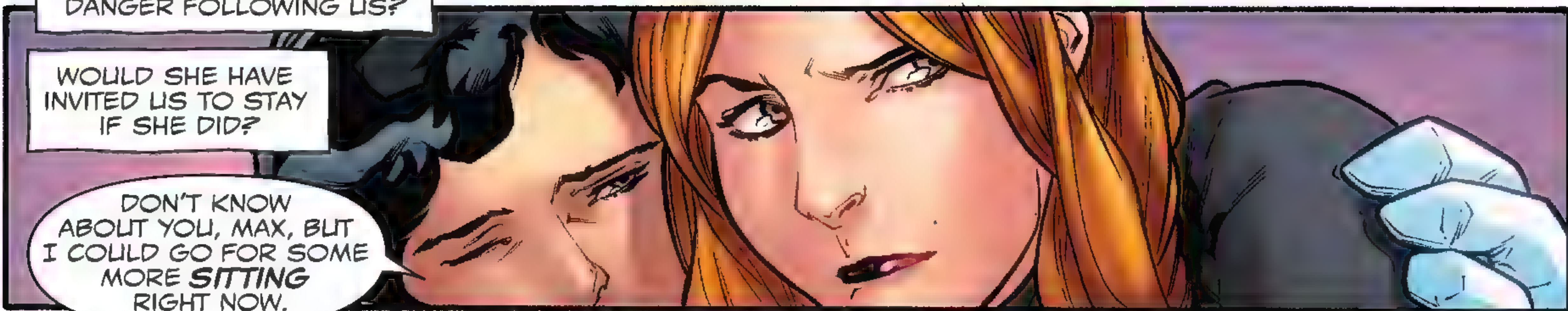
IT'S NOT NEIGHBORS I'M WORRIED ABOUT. DOES SHE EVEN UNDERSTAND THE DANGER FOLLOWING US?

WOULD SHE HAVE INVITED US TO STAY IF SHE DID?

DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, MAX, BUT I COULD GO FOR SOME MORE **SITTING** RIGHT NOW.

STAY LOW, GUYS. YOU DON'T WANT TO BE SPOTTED.

THEY'LL BE FINE. I HAVE FIFTY ACRES HERE. AND NO NEIGHBORS AROUND FOR MILES.



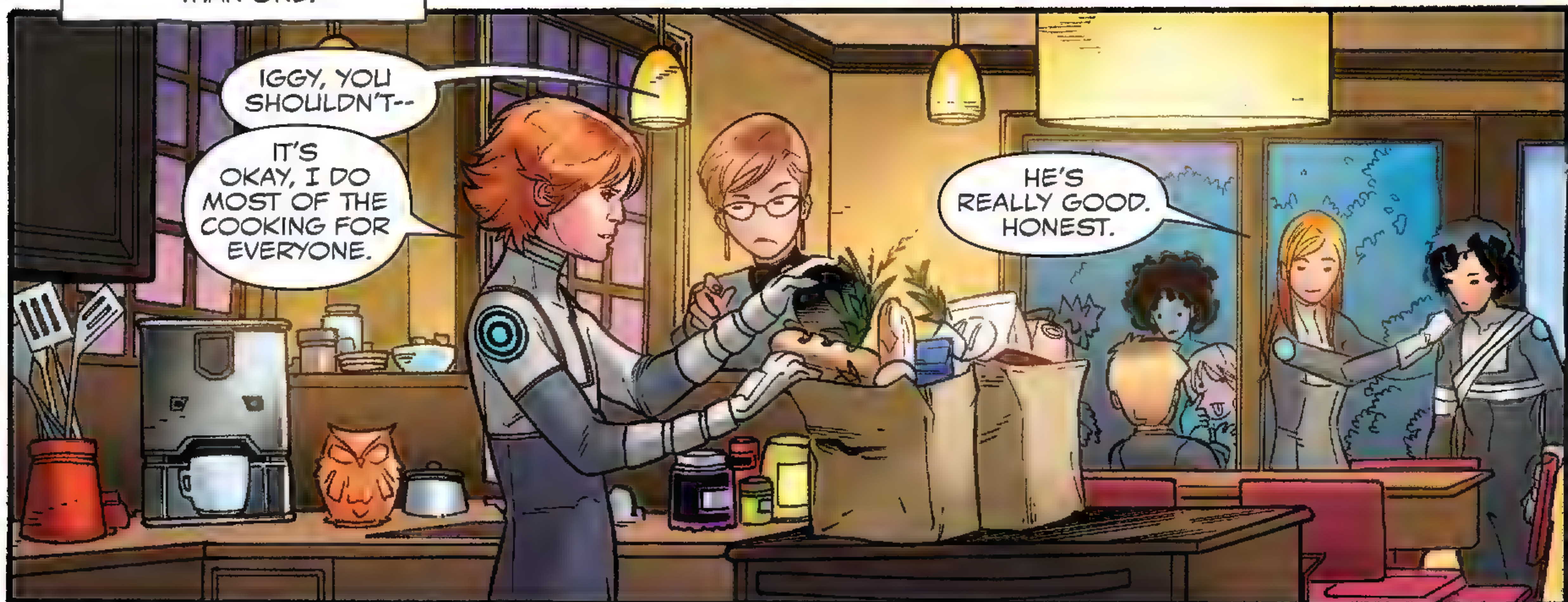


KNOWING THESE GUYS, THEY SHOULD BE LOOKING FOR ESCAPE ROUTES IN BETWEEN THE SCENERY.

WOW, IT'S EVEN BIGGER ON THE INSIDE!

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT, BUT THERE ARE ENOUGH BEDROOMS FOR EVERYONE TO HAVE THEIR OWN.

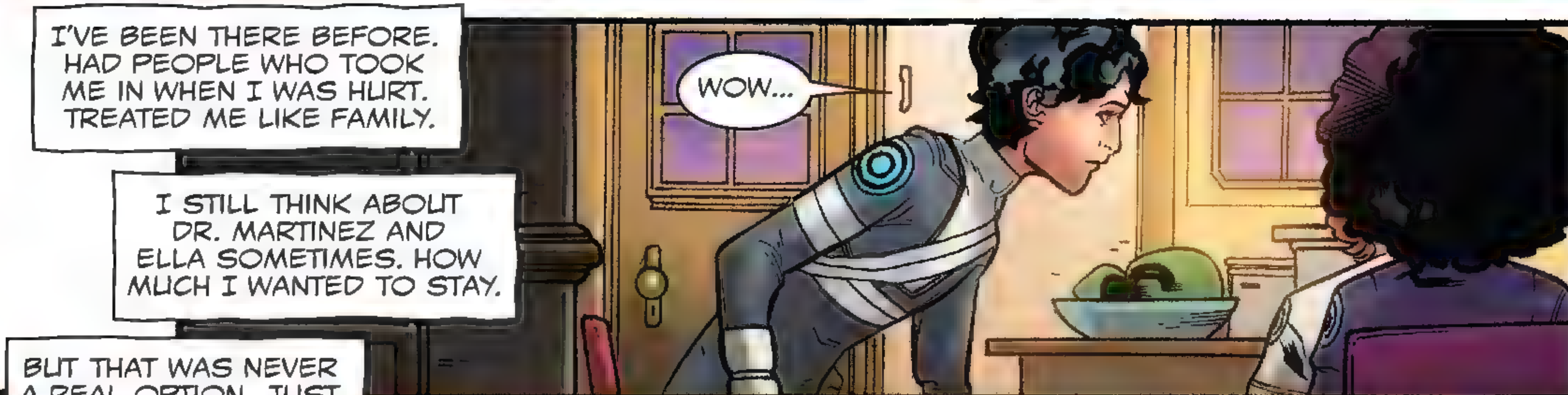
A PLACE LIKE THIS, TOO EASY FOR IT TO BECOME A TRAP. IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE.



IGGY, YOU SHOULDN'T--

IT'S OKAY, I DO MOST OF THE COOKING FOR EVERYONE.

HE'S REALLY GOOD. HONEST.

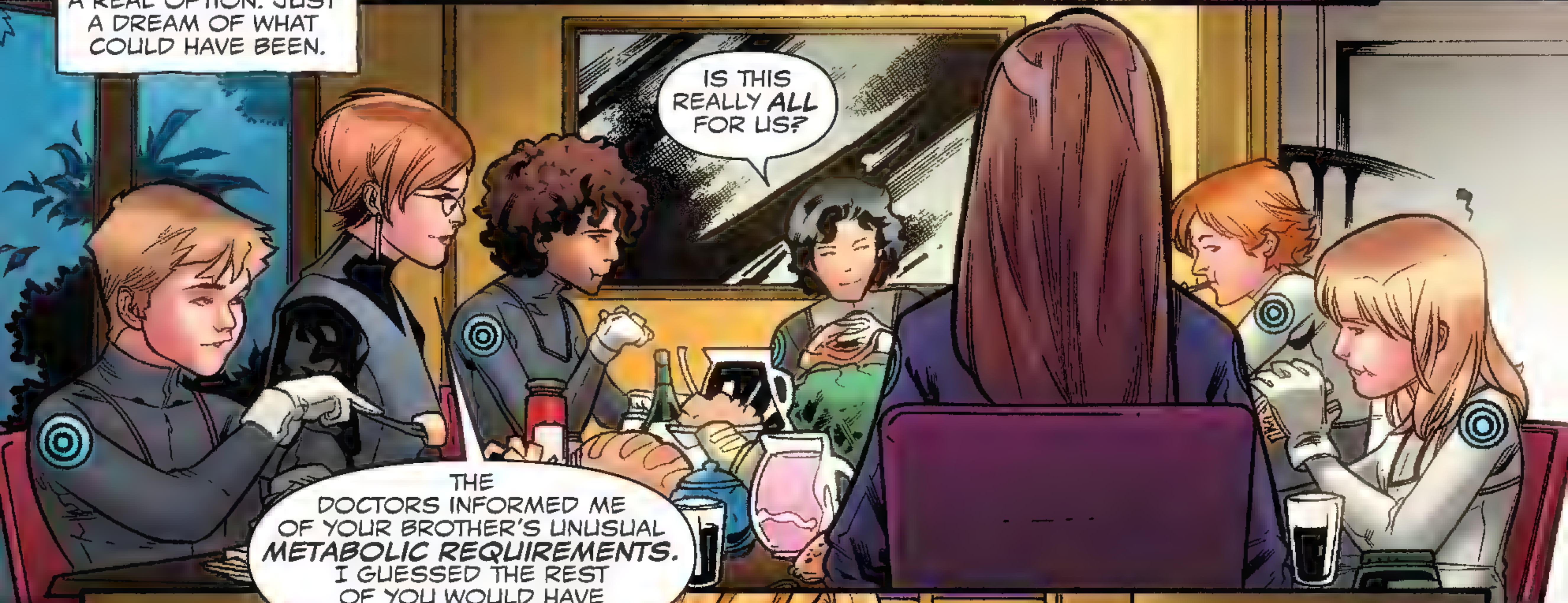


I'VE BEEN THERE BEFORE. HAD PEOPLE WHO TOOK ME IN WHEN I WAS HURT. TREATED ME LIKE FAMILY.

WOW...

I STILL THINK ABOUT DR. MARTINEZ AND ELLA SOMETIMES. HOW MUCH I WANTED TO STAY.

BUT THAT WAS NEVER A REAL OPTION. JUST A DREAM OF WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN.

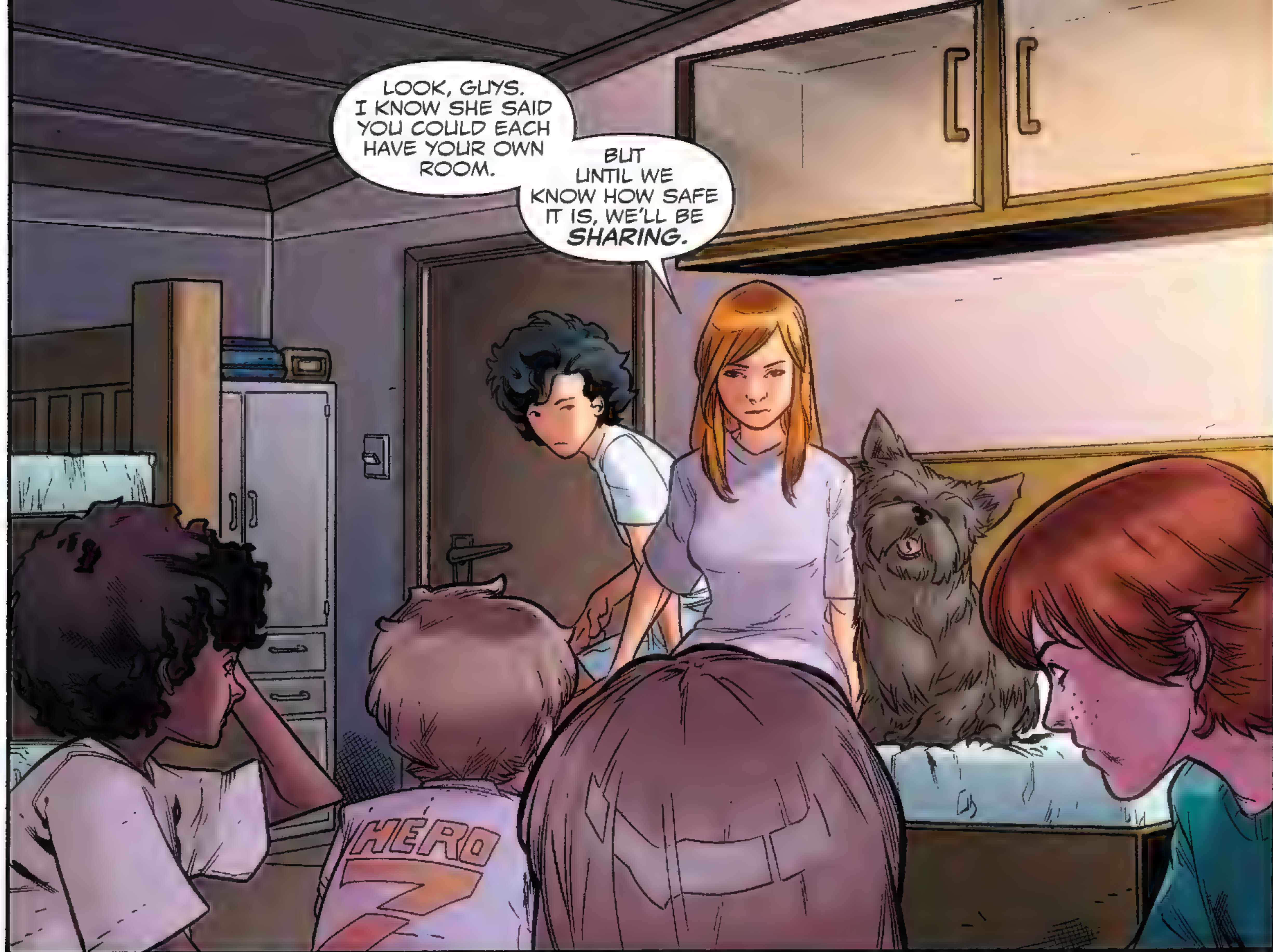


IS THIS REALLY ALL FOR US?

THE DOCTORS INFORMED ME OF YOUR BROTHER'S UNUSUAL METABOLIC REQUIREMENTS. I GUESSED THE REST OF YOU WOULD HAVE SIMILAR NEEDS.

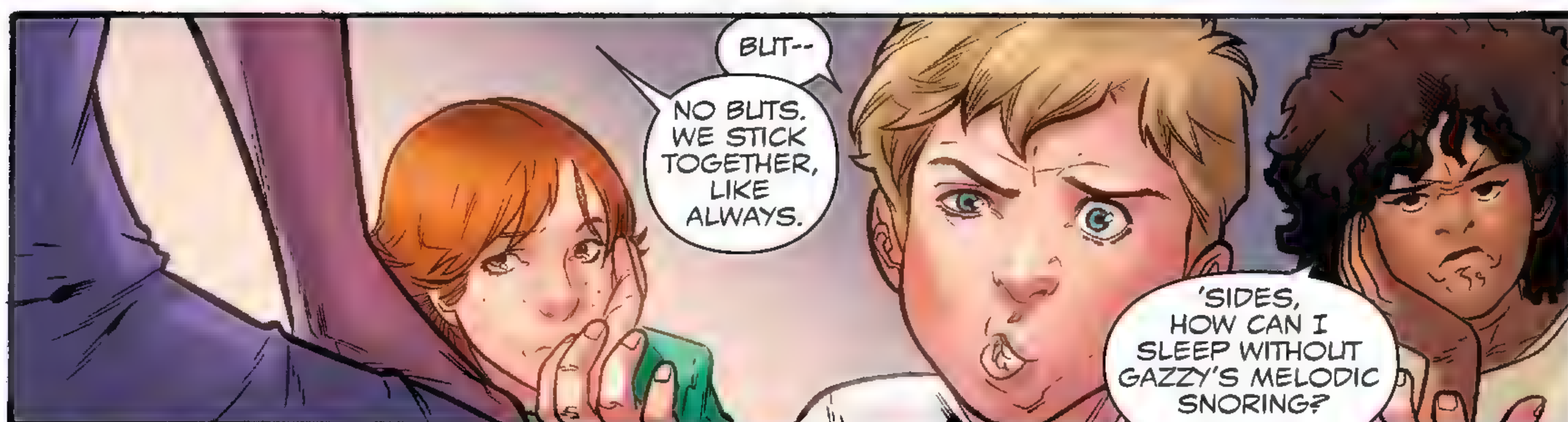
WE NEVER HAVE THIS MUCH FOOD TO EAT!

A LIFE I CAN'T HAVE. AND THE ONE THAT THE REST OF THEM DESERVE.



LOOK, GUYS.
I KNOW SHE SAID
YOU COULD EACH
HAVE YOUR OWN
ROOM.

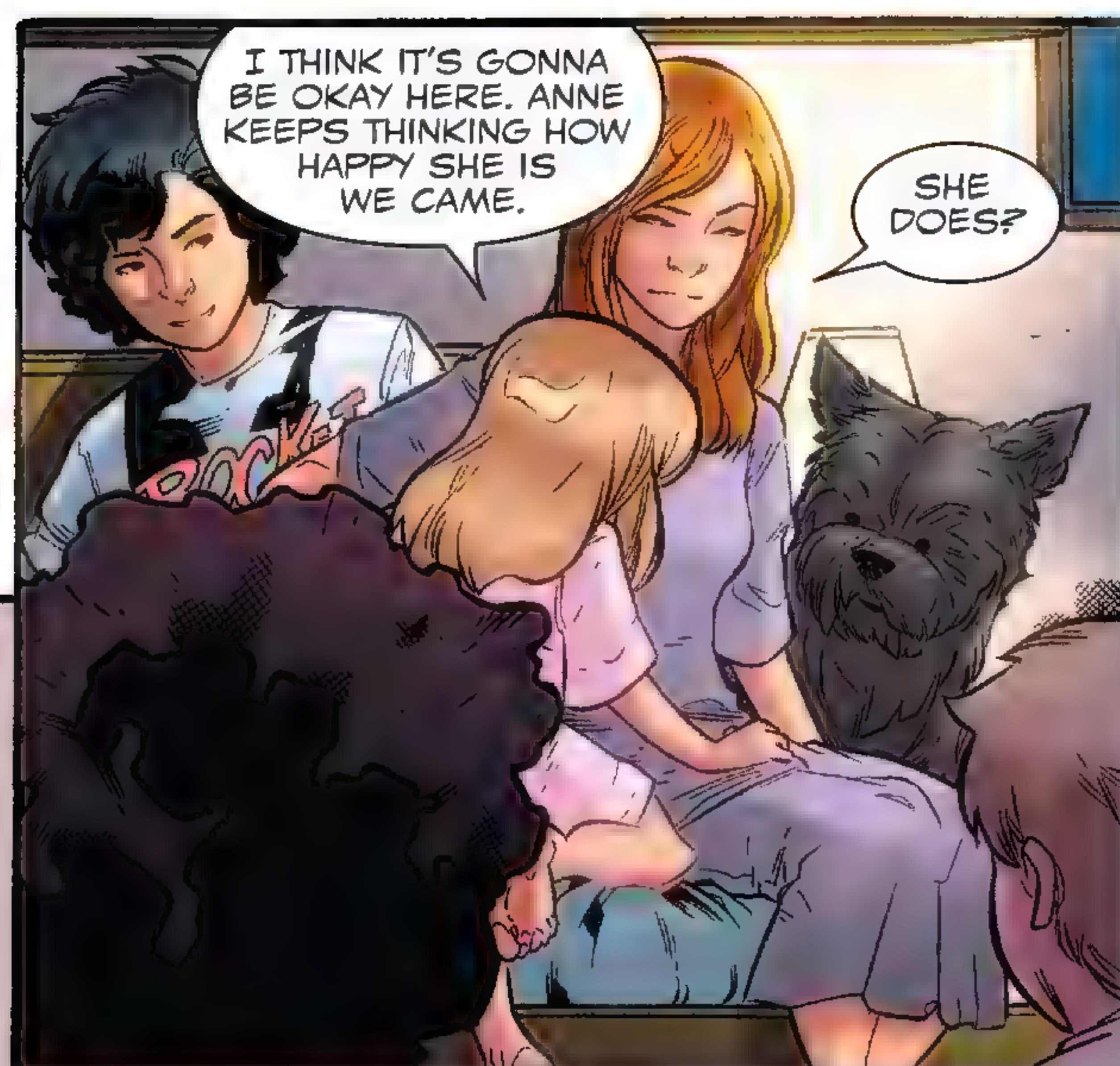
BUT
UNTIL WE
KNOW HOW SAFE
IT IS, WE'LL BE
SHARING.



BUT--

NO BUTS.
WE STICK
TOGETHER,
LIKE
ALWAYS.

'SIDES,
HOW CAN I
SLEEP WITHOUT
GAZZY'S MELODIC
SNORING?



I THINK IT'S GONNA
BE OKAY HERE. ANNE
KEEPS THINKING HOW
HAPPY SHE IS
WE CAME.

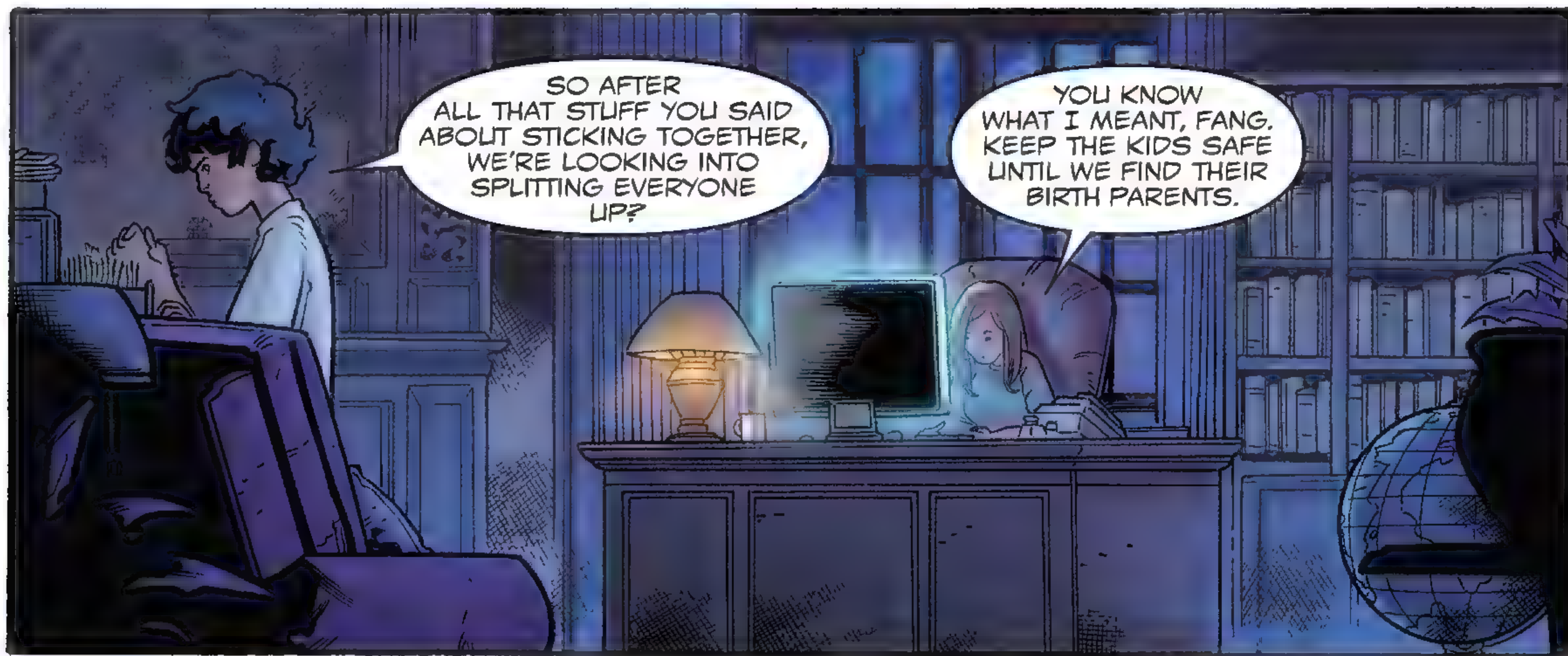
SHE
DOES?

HANDY LITTLE THING,
HAVING A TELEPATH
BACKING UP YOUR
TEAM. NOT THAT
IT'S FOOLPROOF.

OR THAT SHE ISN'T
TERRIFYING AT TIMES. JUST
HAPPY SHE'S ON OUR SIDE.

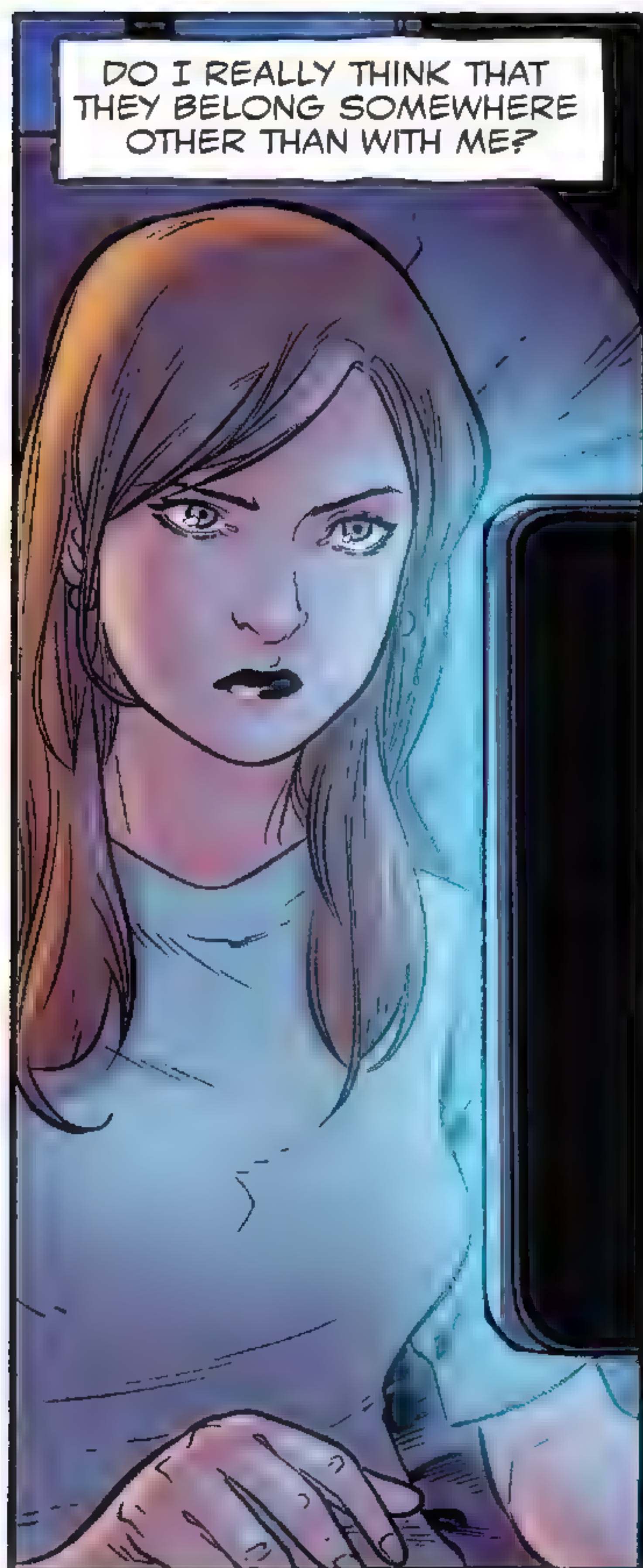
MM-HM.
ISN'T IT
NICE TO BE
WANTED?



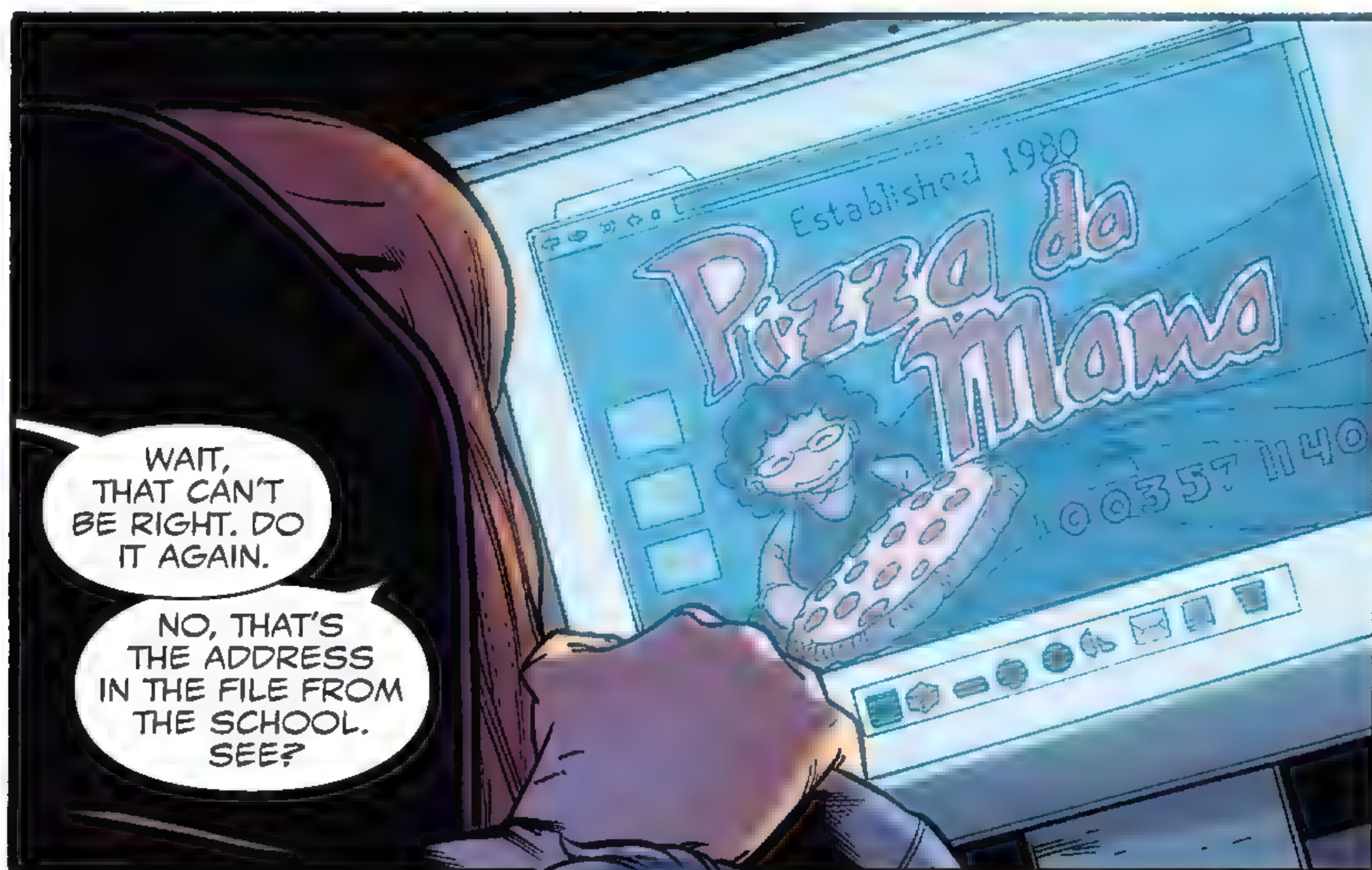


SO AFTER
ALL THAT STUFF YOU SAID
ABOUT STICKING TOGETHER,
WE'RE LOOKING INTO
SPLITTING EVERYONE
UP?

YOU KNOW
WHAT I MEANT, FANG.
KEEP THE KIDS SAFE
UNTIL WE FIND THEIR
BIRTH PARENTS.

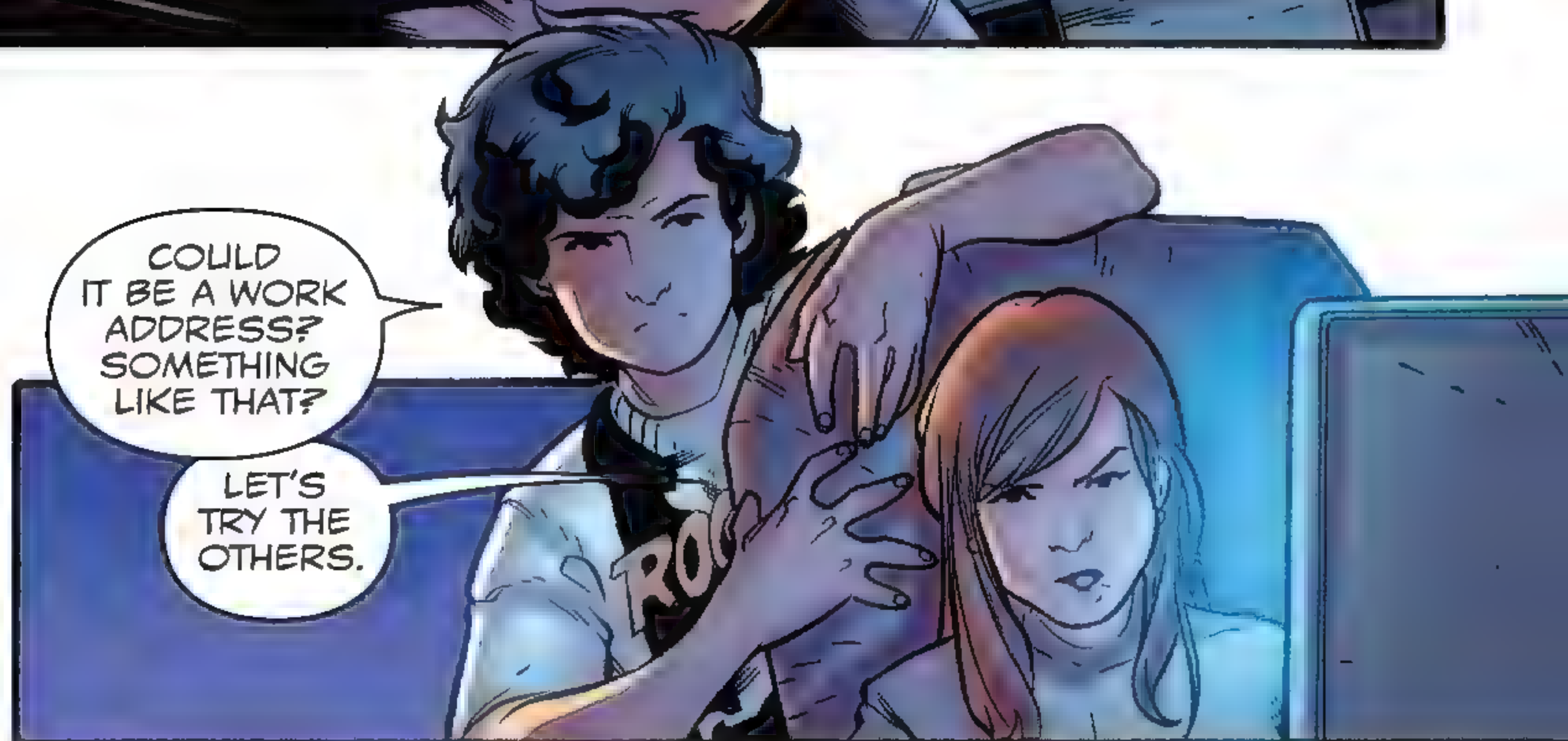


DO I REALLY THINK THAT
THEY BELONG SOMEWHERE
OTHER THAN WITH ME?



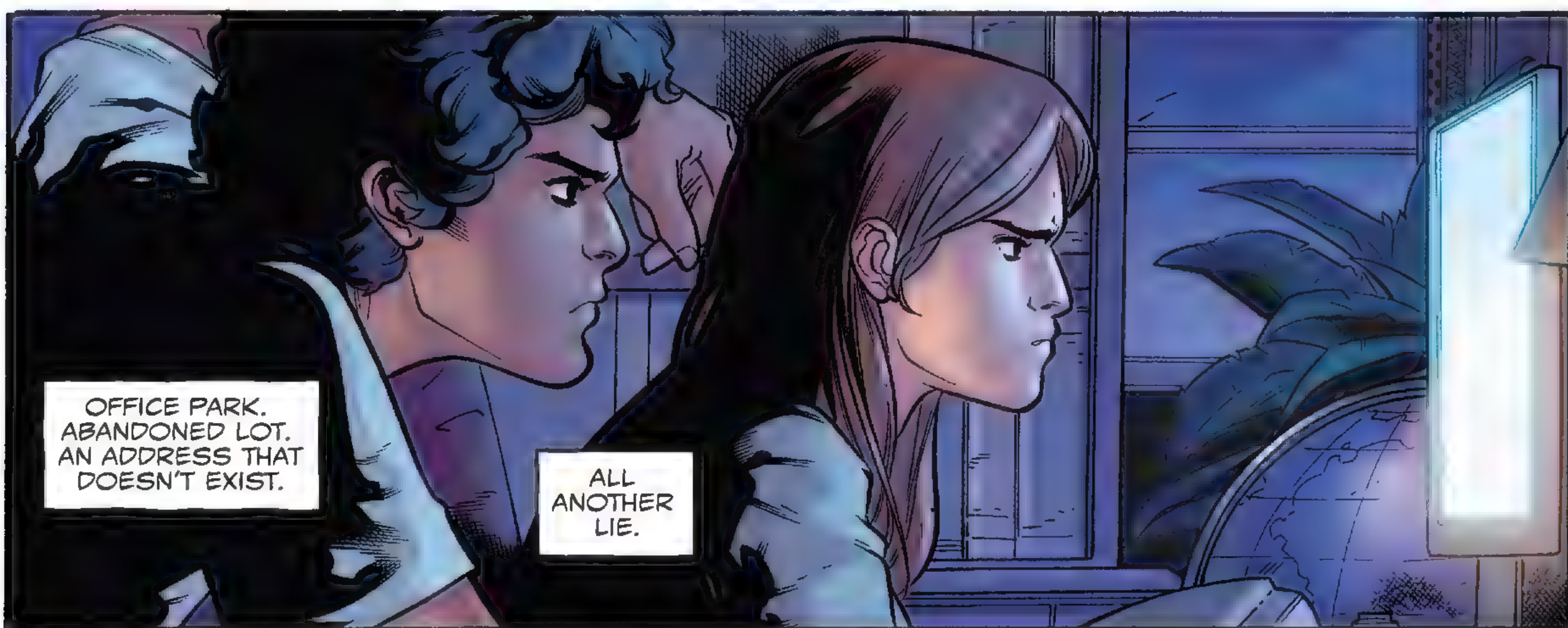
WAIT,
THAT CAN'T
BE RIGHT. DO
IT AGAIN.

NO, THAT'S
THE ADDRESS
IN THE FILE FROM
THE SCHOOL.
SEE?



COULD
IT BE A WORK
ADDRESS?
SOMETHING
LIKE THAT?

LET'S
TRY THE
OTHERS.



OFFICE PARK.
ABANDONED LOT.
AN ADDRESS THAT
DOESN'T EXIST.

ALL
ANOTHER
LIE.

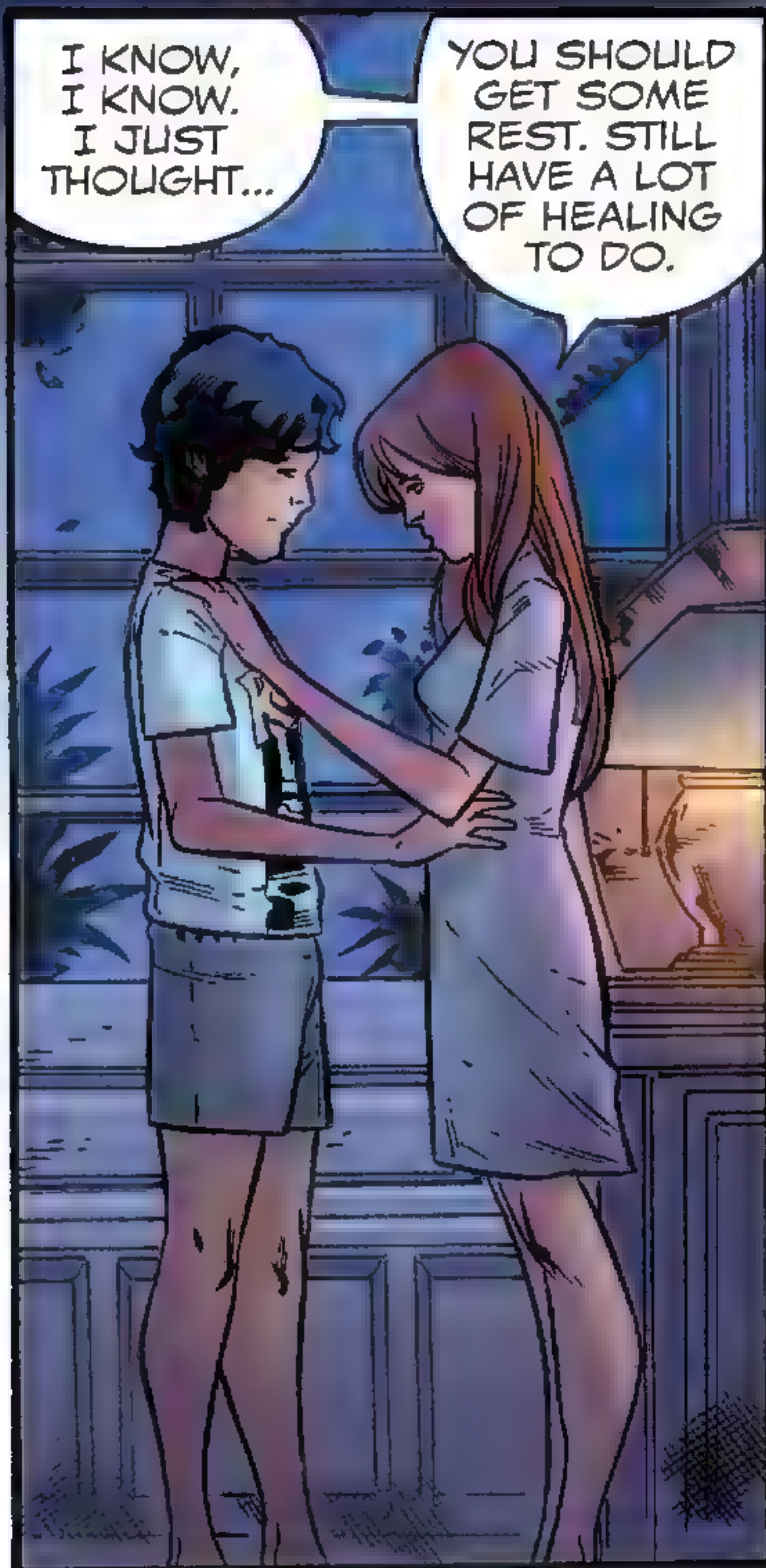


DAMMIT!
AFTER EVERYTHING
WE WENT
THROUGH...

DID THEY
WANT US TO FIND
THESE ADDRESSES?
TO THINK WE CAME FROM
SOMEPLACE BESIDES
A TEST TUBE?

HEY. IT'S
OKAY. WE DON'T HAVE
TO FIGURE OUT OUR
WHOLE ORIGIN STORY
IN ONE NIGHT.

WE'VE GOT
BEDS AND FOOD AND
COMPUTER ACCESS. WE'RE
IN A GOOD PLACE TO
KEEP DIGGING.

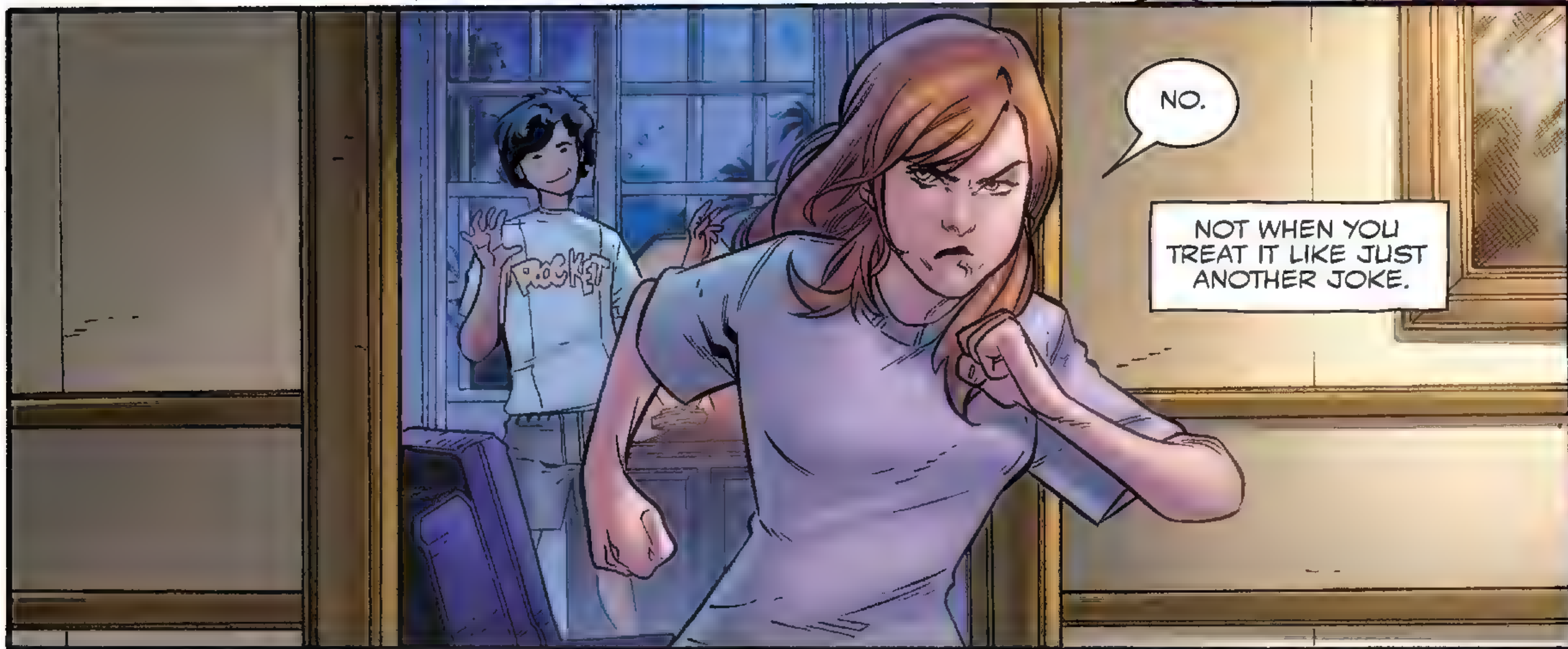


I KNOW,
I KNOW.
I JUST
THOUGHT...

YOU SHOULD
GET SOME
REST. STILL
HAVE A LOT
OF HEALING
TO DO.

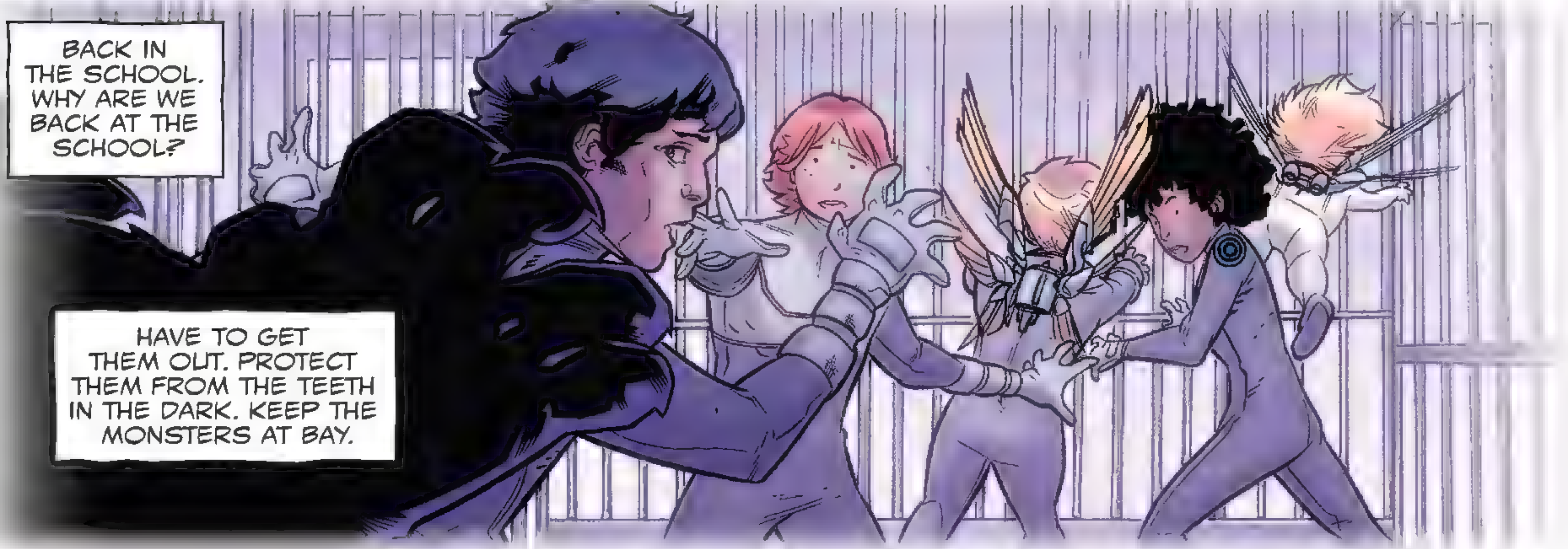


DO
I GET A KISS
GOODNIGHT?



NO.

NOT WHEN YOU
TREAT IT LIKE JUST
ANOTHER JOKE.

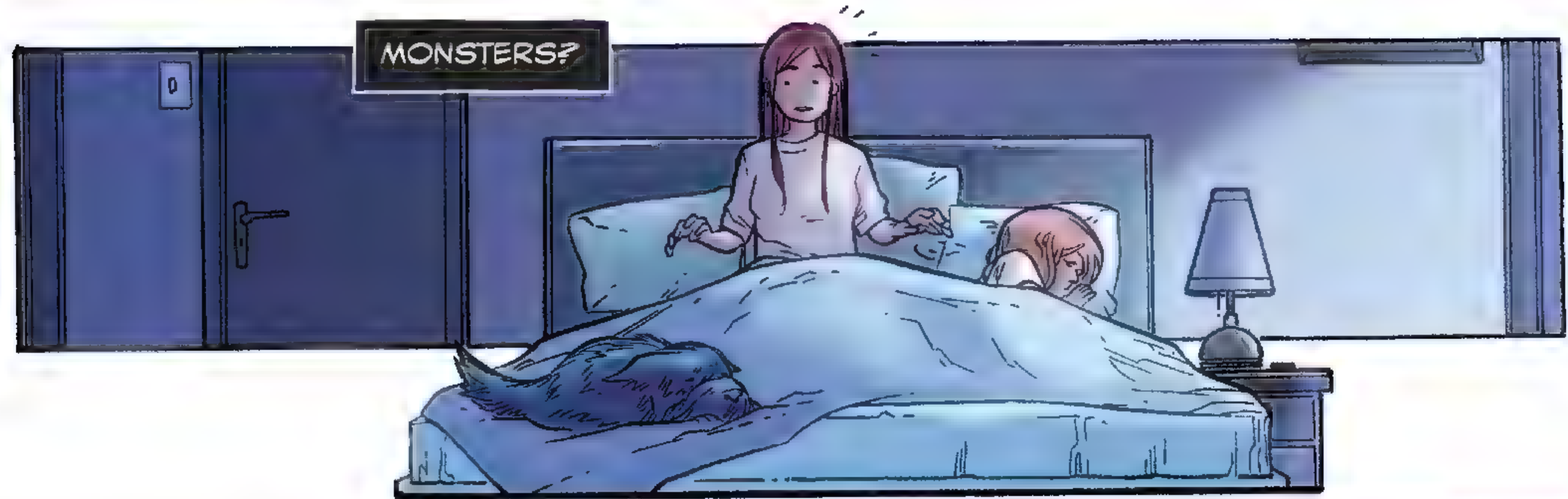


BACK IN THE SCHOOL. WHY ARE WE BACK AT THE SCHOOL?

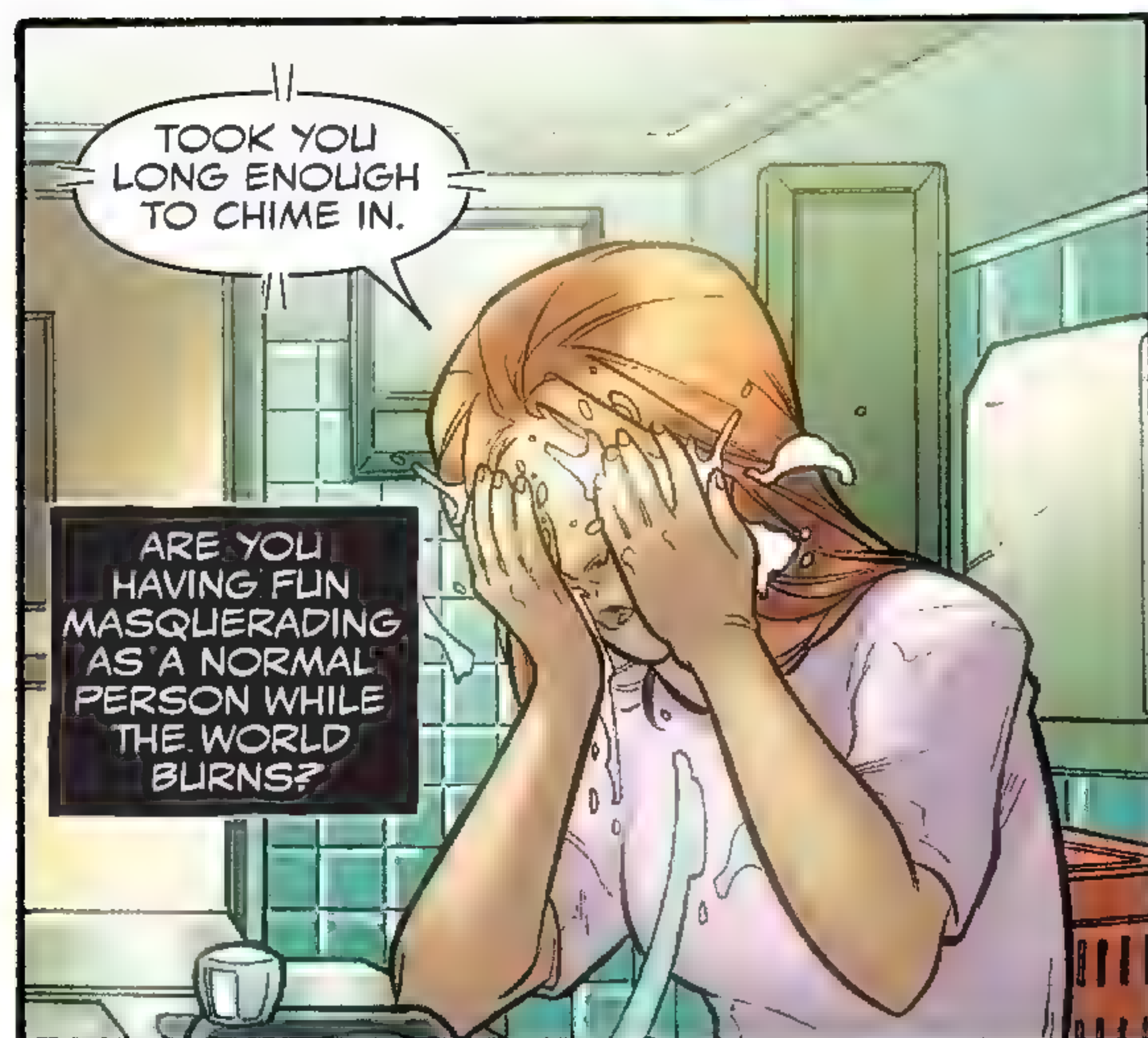
HAVE TO GET THEM OUT. PROTECT THEM FROM THE TEETH IN THE DARK. KEEP THE MONSTERS AT BAY.



NO, THIS ISN'T REAL. NOT ME. I'M NOT ONE OF THE--

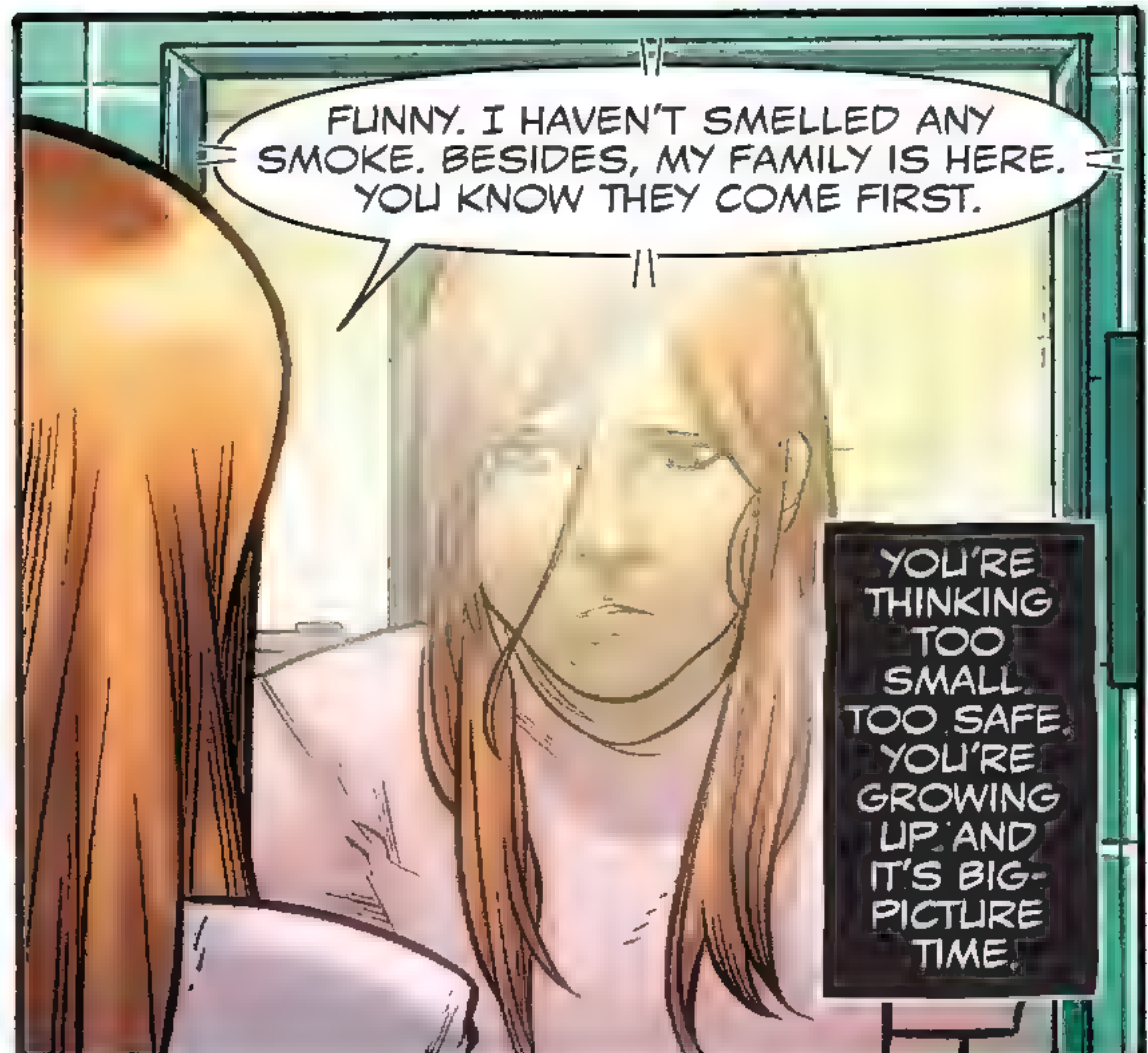


MONSTERS?



TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH TO CHIME IN.

ARE YOU HAVING FUN MASQUERADING AS A NORMAL PERSON WHILE THE WORLD BURNS?



FUNNY. I HAVEN'T SMELLED ANY SMOKE. BESIDES, MY FAMILY IS HERE. YOU KNOW THEY COME FIRST.

YOU'RE THINKING TOO SMALL. TOO SAFE. YOU'RE GROWING UP. AND IT'S BIG-PICTURE TIME.



SAVE THE WORLD? SURE.
DO YOU HAVE SOME SORT
OF GUIDEBOOK FOR THAT?
STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS?



I'M NOT GOING
TO ABANDON
EVERYONE
BASED ON SOME
WEIRD CRYPTIC
WARNINGS.

EVEN IF THEY
ARE COMING FROM
INSIDE MY HEAD.



THIS IS MY FAMILY. PROTECTING
THEM, HELPING THEM FIND WHERE
THEY COME FROM IS MY JOB.

IT SAYS YOU SHOULD
REALLY JUST GIVE UP
ON BUBBLE BOP. OR AT
LEAST STOP BUYING
MORE LIVES.

...RIGHT.



BESIDES,
SOMEONE HAS
TO KEEP THEM
FROM GETTING
IN TOO MUCH
TROUBLE.

CASING
IS A LITTLE
LOOSE
ON THIS
SIDE...

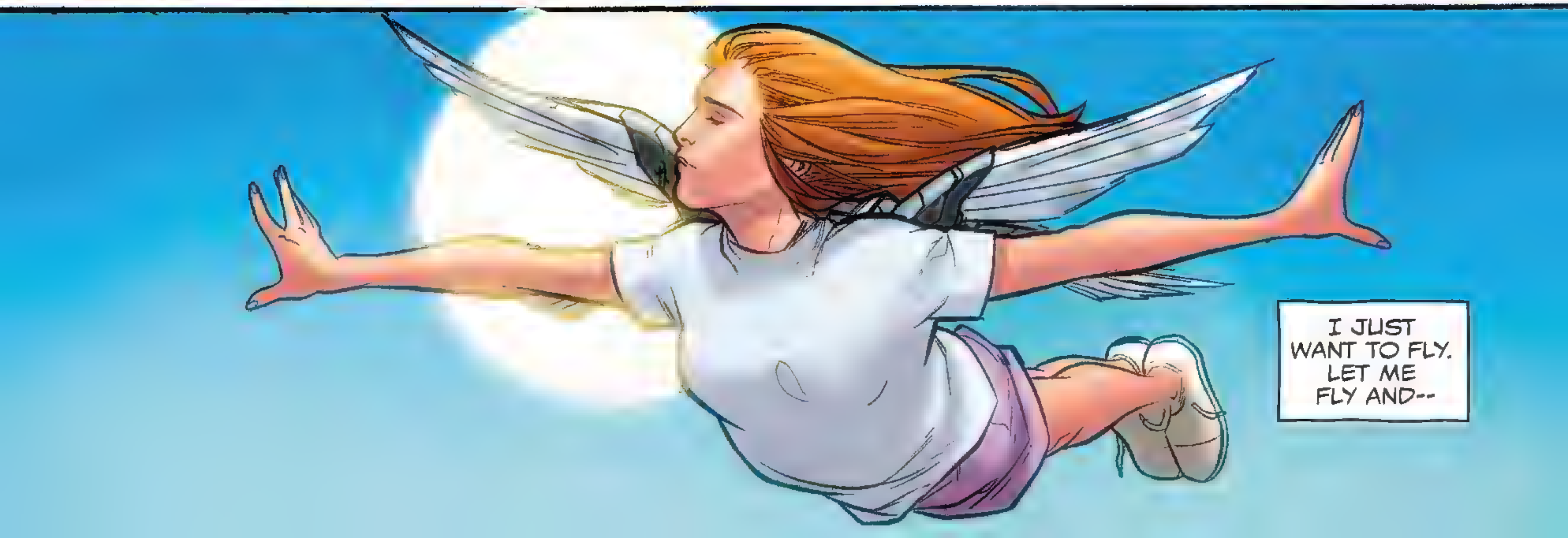
ON
IT!



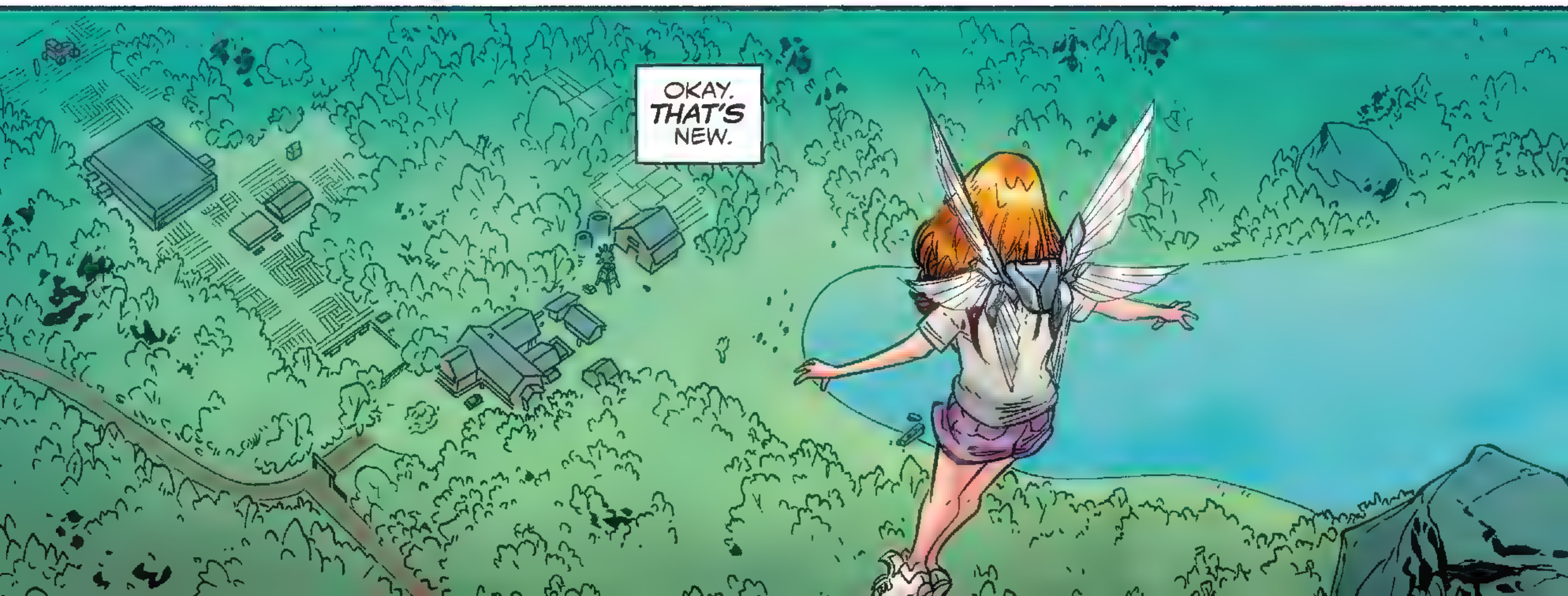
I ALREADY HAVE
A JOB TO DO. THE
WORLD CAN TAKE
CARE OF ITSELF.

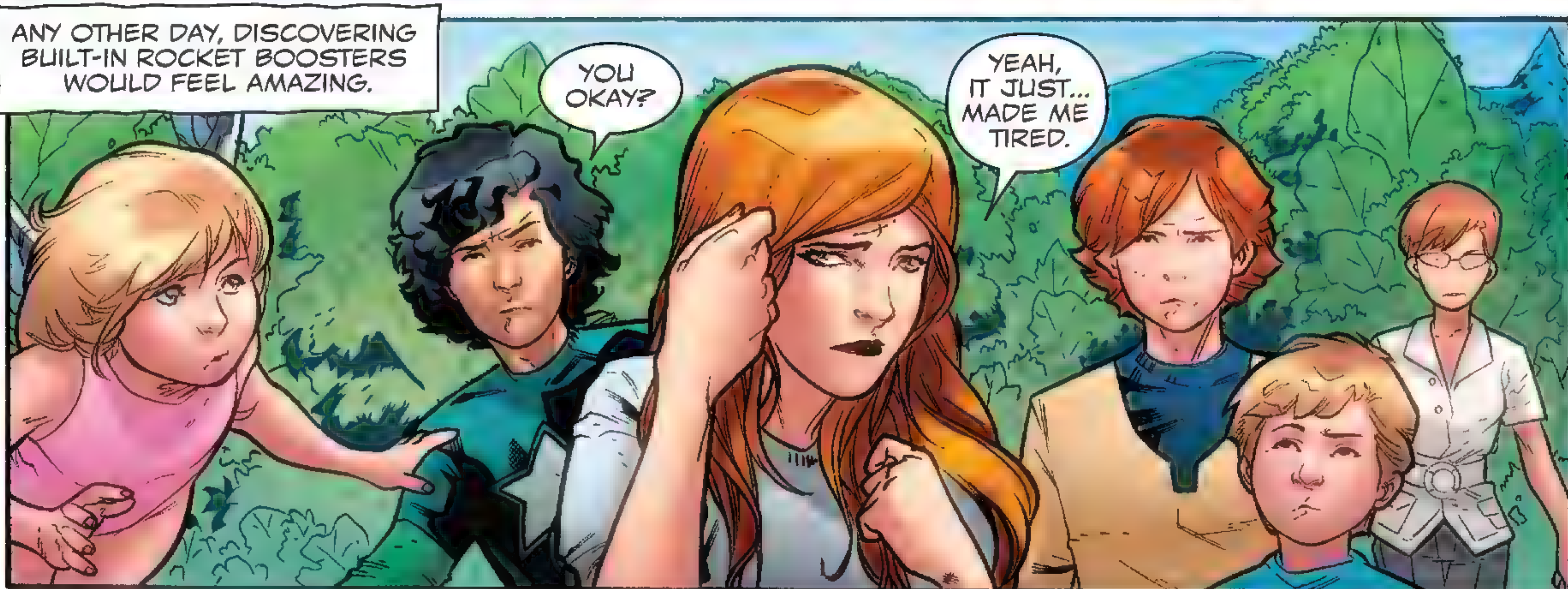
HOW
LONG WAS
THAT?!

LONG
ENOUGH TO
FREAK OUT ANNE,
I THINK. MAYBE
WE SHOULD HAVE
MENTIONED
THE GILLS.



I JUST
WANT TO FLY.
LET ME
FLY AND--

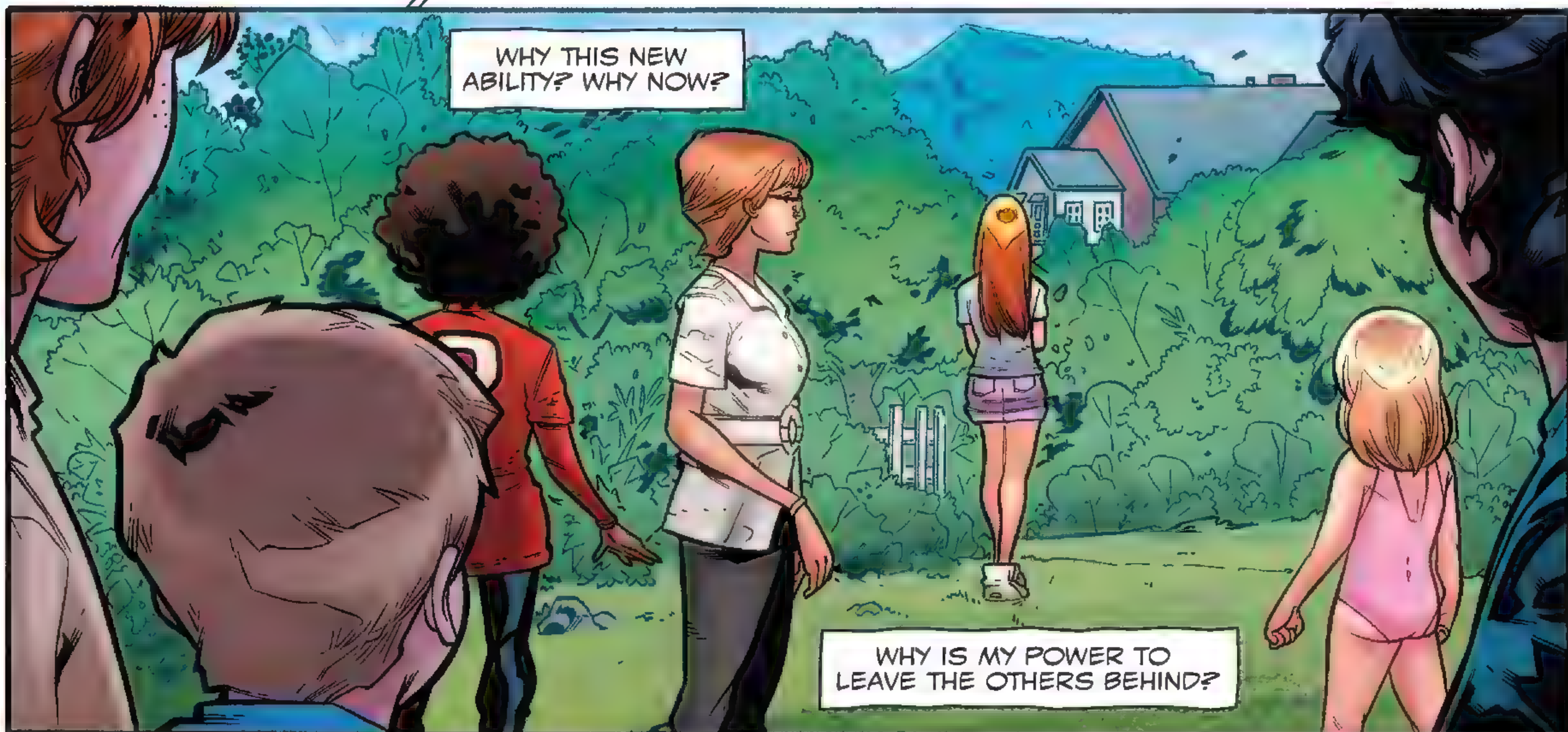
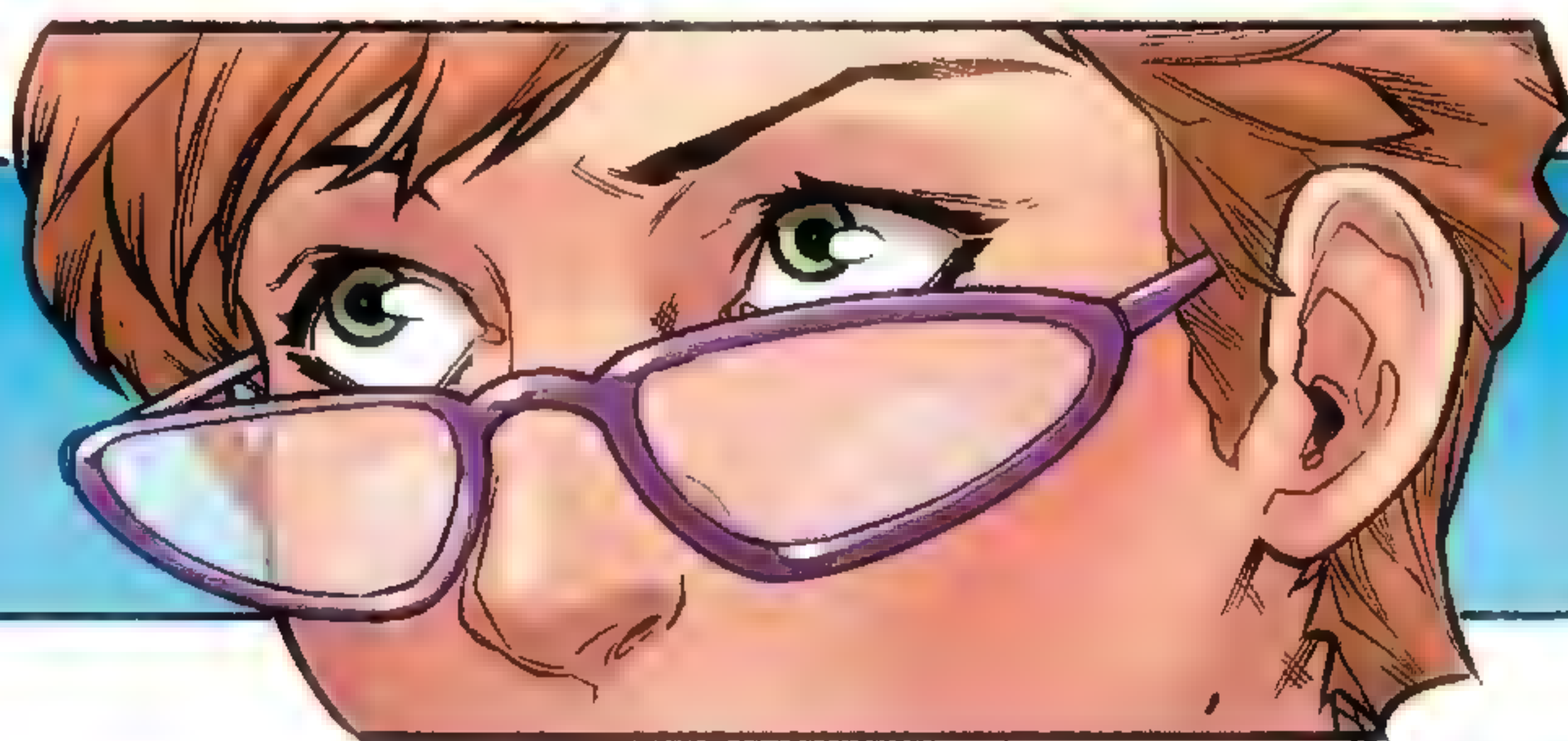


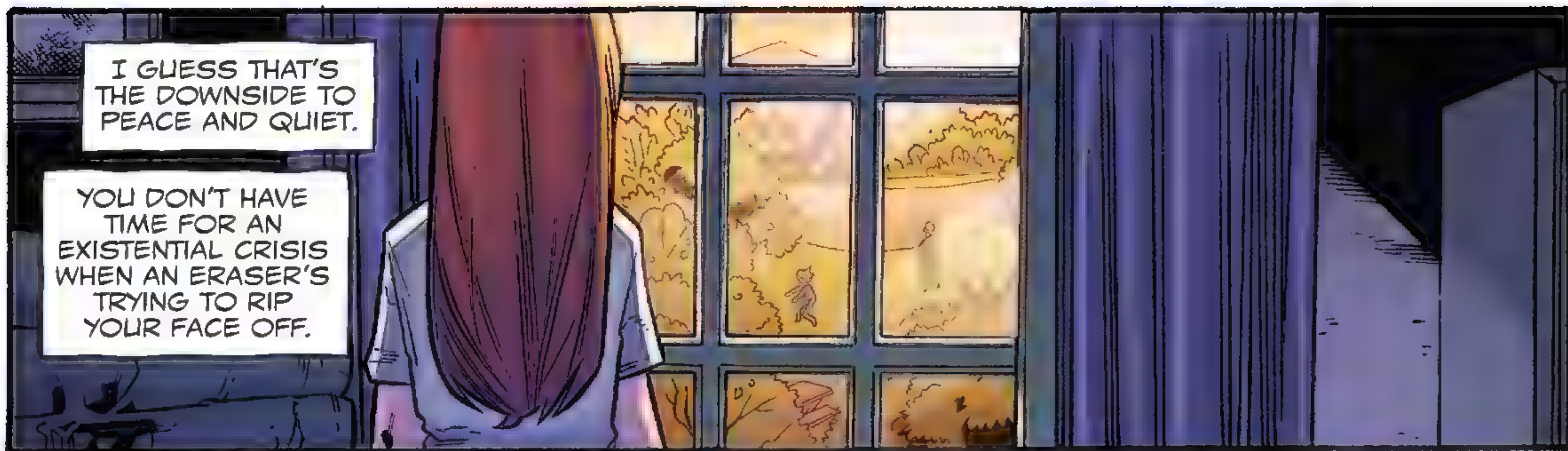


BUT THE TIMING OF THIS MAKES ME WONDER.

MAX, I SAW YOU JUST...VANISH. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

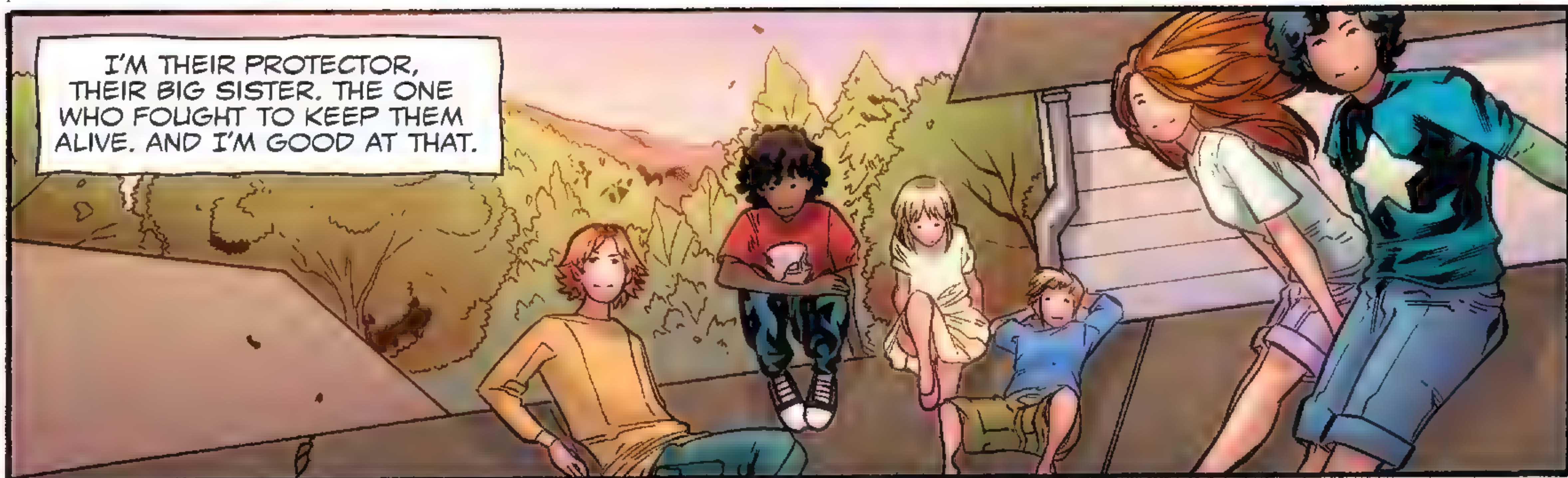
I'LL BE FINE. NEED TO LIE DOWN FOR A BIT.



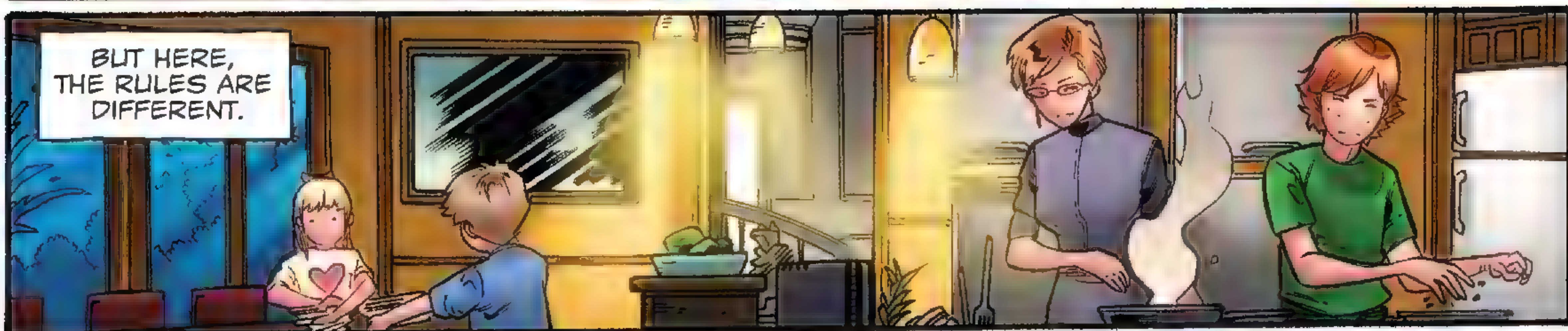


I GUESS THAT'S
THE DOWNSIDE TO
PEACE AND QUIET.

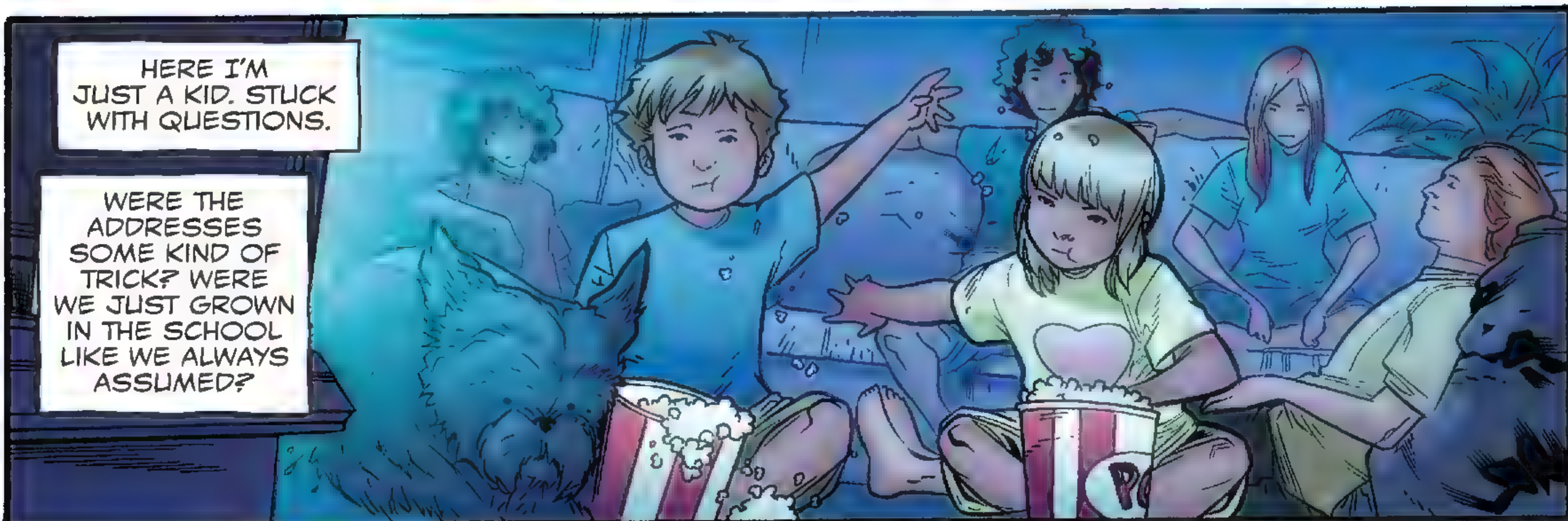
YOU DON'T HAVE
TIME FOR AN
EXISTENTIAL CRISIS
WHEN AN ERASER'S
TRYING TO RIP
YOUR FACE OFF.



I'M THEIR PROTECTOR,
THEIR BIG SISTER. THE ONE
WHO FOUGHT TO KEEP THEM
ALIVE. AND I'M GOOD AT THAT.

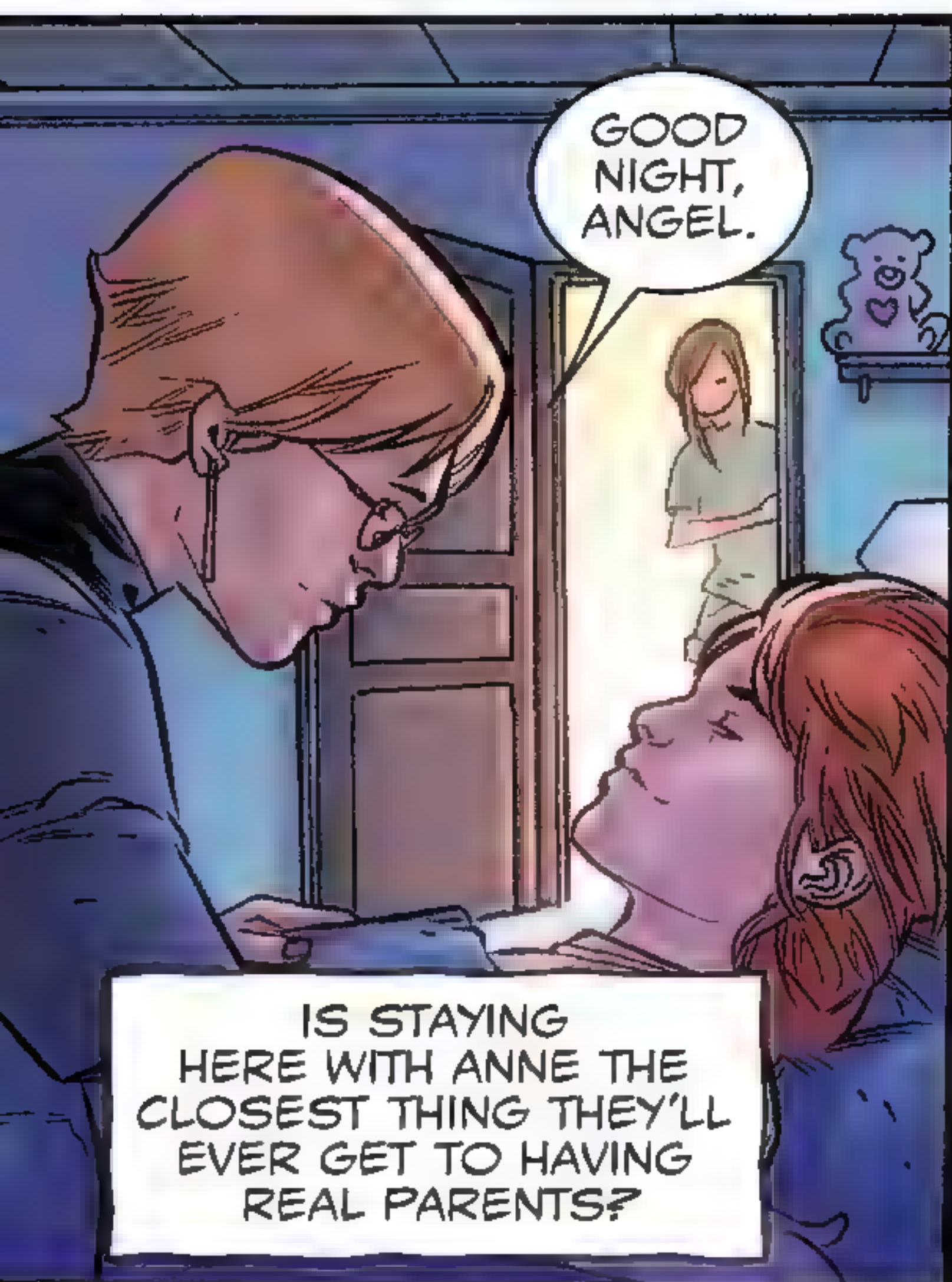


BUT HERE,
THE RULES ARE
DIFFERENT.



HERE I'M
JUST A KID. STUCK
WITH QUESTIONS.

WERE THE
ADDRESSES
SOME KIND OF
TRICK? WERE
WE JUST GROWN
IN THE SCHOOL
LIKE WE ALWAYS
ASSUMED?

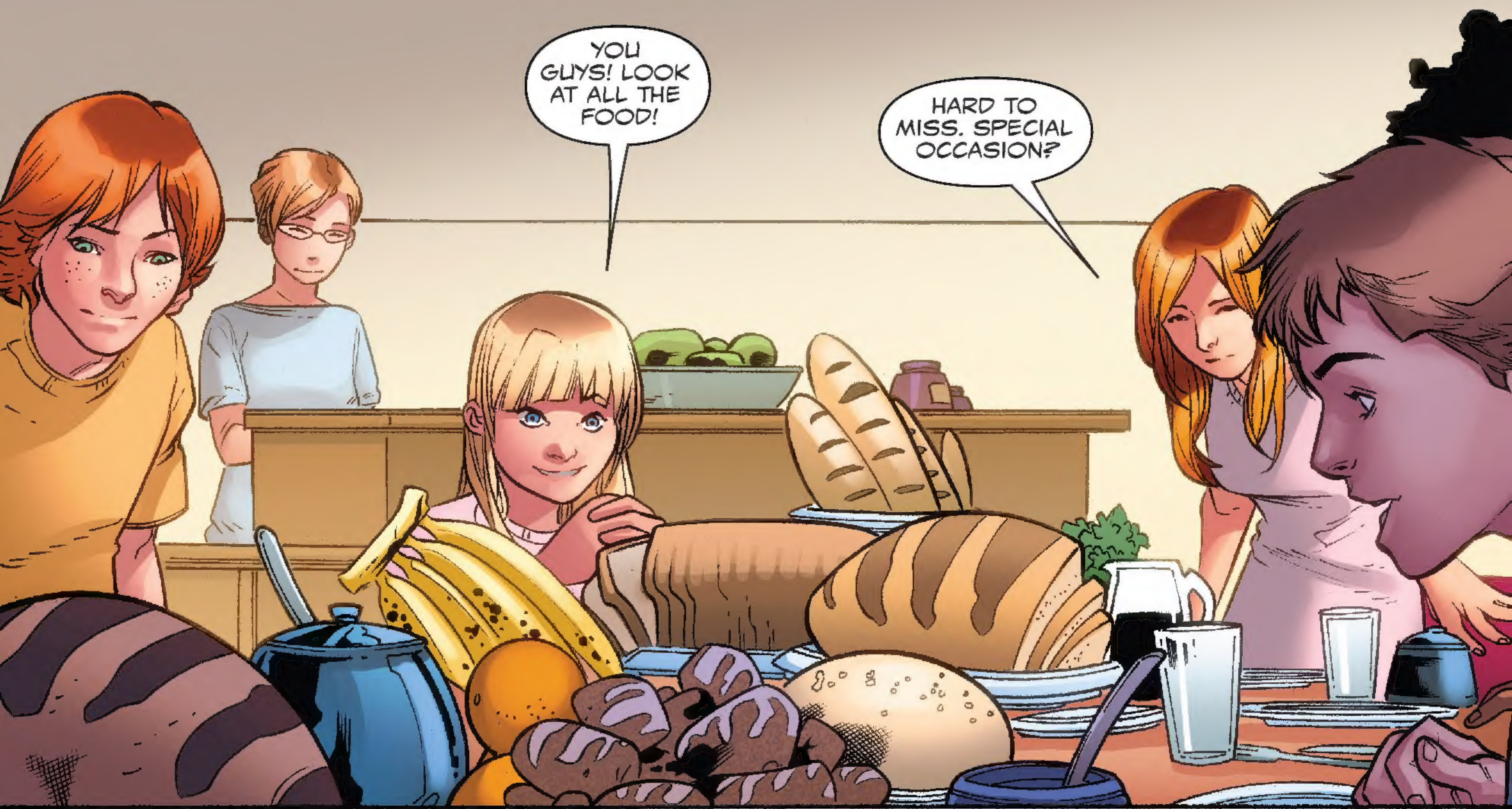


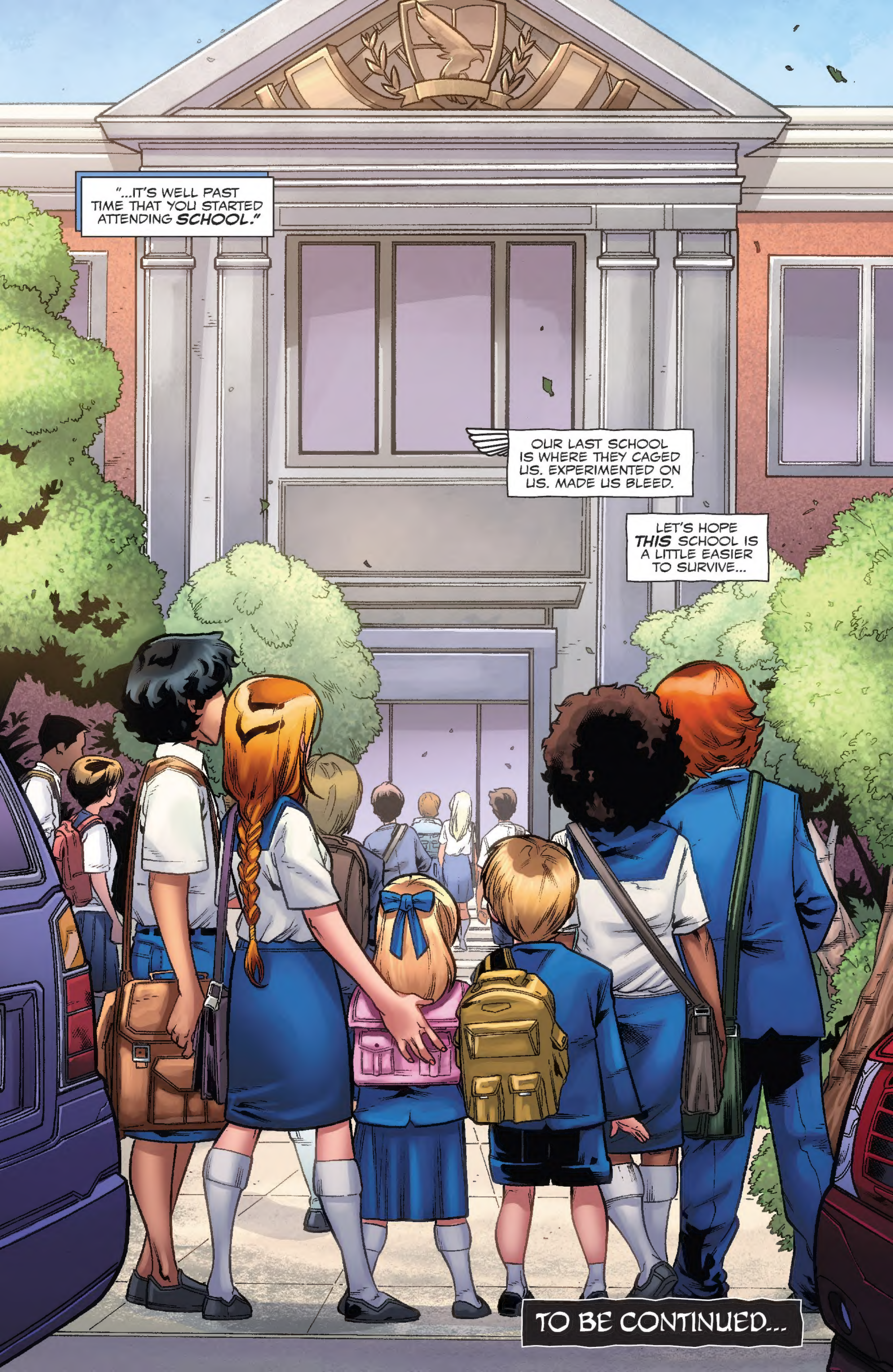
GOOD
NIGHT,
ANGEL.

IS STAYING
HERE WITH ANNE THE
CLOSEST THING THEY'LL
EVER GET TO HAVING
REAL PARENTS?



AM I GOING TO BE THE
ONE LEFT BEHIND IN THE END,
HOWEVER FAST I FLY?





"...IT'S WELL PAST
TIME THAT YOU STARTED
ATTENDING **SCHOOL.**"

OUR LAST SCHOOL
IS WHERE THEY CAGED
US. EXPERIMENTED ON
US. MADE US BLEED.

LET'S HOPE
THIS SCHOOL IS
A LITTLE EASIER
TO SURVIVE...

TO BE CONTINUED...

Issue #2



